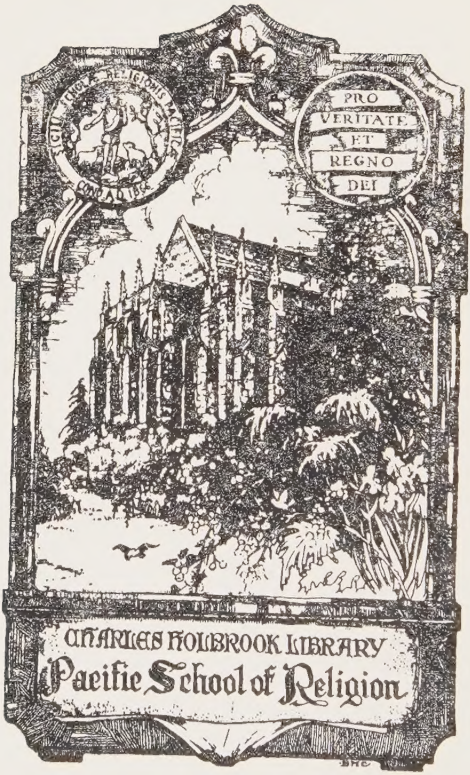
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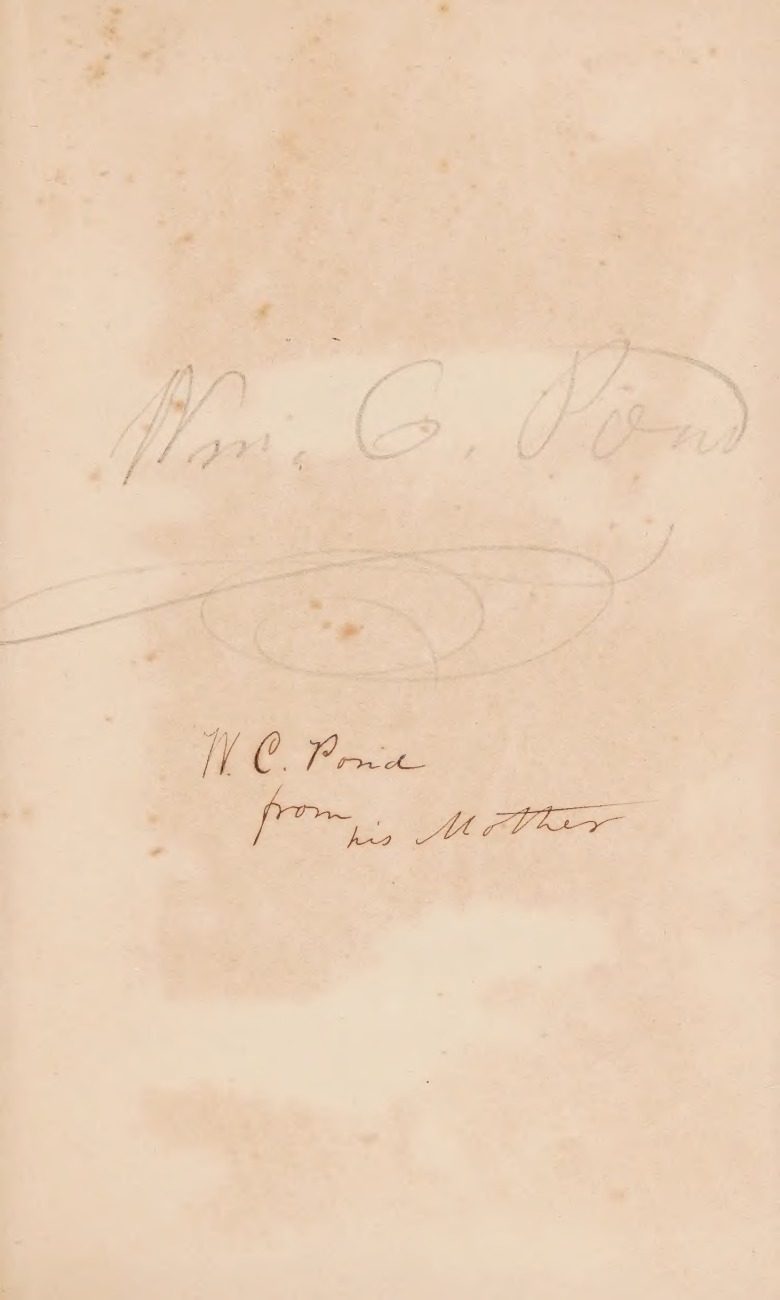
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W. C. Pond
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W. C. Pond

LETTERS

TO

YOUNG MEN,

FOUNDED ON THE

HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BY

WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

OF ALBANY.

FOURTH EDITION.

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CONTENTS.

Page.

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH, ... 7

PART I.

SOURCES OF DANGER TO YOUNG MEN.

LETTER I.

DANGER FROM EXCESSIVE PARENTAL INDULGENCE, . . 29

LETTER II.

DANGER FROM INJURIOUS TREATMENT, ... 38

LETTER III.

DANGER FROM LIVING AWAY FROM HOME, ... 47

LETTER IV.

Page.

DANGER FROM LIVING IN A CORRUPT STATE OF SOCIETY, . 58

LETTER V.

DANGER FROM BEING SUDDENLY CAST INTO ADVERSITY, . 71

LETTER VI.

DANGER FROM BEING ENTRUSTED WITH THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS, ... 80

LETTER VII.

DANGER FROM COMING INTO POSSESSION OF GREAT WEALTH, ... 90

PART II.

CHARACTER TO WHICH YOUNG MEN SHOULD ASPIRE.

LETTER VIII.

INTEGRITY, ... 101

LETTER IX.

DILIGENCE, ... 117

LETTER X.

ECONOMY, ... 129

LETTER XI.

Page.
DIGNITY, ... 137

LETTER XII.

SYMPATHY, ... 154

LETTER XIII.

FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES, ... 166

LETTER XIV.

FILIAL REGARD, ... 181

LETTER XV.

DEPENDANCE ON GOD, ... 194

PART III.

REWARDS THAT CROWN A VIRTUOUS COURSE.

LETTER XVI.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH SAFETY, ... 207

LETTER XVII.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH PEACE, ... 217

LETTER XVIII.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH RICHES, ... 227

LETTER XIX.

Page
VIRTUE CROWNED WITH HONOUR, ... 240

LETTER XX.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH USEFULNESS, ... 252

LETTER XXI.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH HEAVEN, ... 263

OUTLINE

OF THE

HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

The first scene in the history of Joseph, as it is preserved in the inspired record, occurred when he was about seventeen years of age, while he yet dwelt with Jacob his father in the land of Canaan, and was occupied with his brethren in the capacity of a shepherd. As he seems to have been a boy of uncommon promise, and was the child of his father's old age, and withal had lost a mother whose memory was most dear to the heart of his surviving parent, it is not strange that Jacob should have regarded him with peculiar affection; nor, considering the weakness of human nature, was it strange that his affection should have betrayed him into an unreasonable and dangerous partiality.

He manifested his preference for him by dressing him up in a showy and perhaps expensive coat—a measure certainly which was but too well fitted to call forth the envy of his brethren.

About this time Joseph had two singular dreams, representing most strikingly his own future ascendancy over his brethren; and these dreams, no doubt in consequence of divine intimation, he communicated to them; and, as might have been expected, they heard him with any thing else than pleasure or patience. Having gone from home to feed their father's flock, Jacob proposed to Joseph that he should go and make them a visit, and in due time return and report to him concerning their prosperity. Joseph, in the spirit of prompt obedience to his father, and with no other feeling than that of good will toward his brethren, fell in at once with the suggestion; and he set out immediately with a view to find them; and though he had some little difficulty in ascertaining where they were, in consequence of their having changed their place of sojourn, yet he finally overtook them at Dothan. They saw and recognized him while he was yet at a distance; and one would have supposed that the sight of a young brother

coming directly from their aged father, to inquire concerning their health and prosperity, would have been most grateful to them; and that they would have run to meet him and welcome him by their embraces. But so far from that, the sight of him roused up in their bosoms a spirit of malignity and rancour: the fine coat and the offensive dreams gave them more trouble than ever: since they had got him into their power, they resolved to take vengeance on him in *some* way; and their first determination was to despatch him on the spot. In consequence, however, of the proposal of Reuben, whose intention seems to have been to save Joseph's life, and ultimately cause him to be restored to his father, they determined to cast him into a pit in the wilderness, and forthwith fulfilled their purpose; and then, in consequence of the intercessions of Judah, who seems to have revolted at the idea of leaving him to perish, they resolved to sell him, and actually did sell him, as a slave, to a company of Midianitish merchants who happened to be passing that way.

The question now arose among these wicked brethren, in what manner they should conceal their guilt from their father; and the conclusion

was that they should take Joseph's coat, of which they had robbed him, and dip it in the blood of a kid, and pass it off upon Jacob as evidence that his son had been killed by some wild beast. This cruel purpose they put into execution. And it had the desired effect; for the moment Jacob saw it, he recognized it as his son's coat, and exclaimed with anguish that an evil beast had devoured him, and no doubt he had been torn in pieces. Immediately he went into mourning for his son, and refused all the consolation which was proffered him, exclaiming in the bitterness of his soul, and in the sublimity of parental tenderness, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning."

Meanwhile, the Midianites who had bought Joseph, sold him into Egypt, to Potiphar, the captain of the king's guard. And Joseph, by his exemplary fidelity, so commended himself to his new master, that he was presently advanced to a station of influence and authority—was made overseer of his house, and was entrusted with the management of all his concerns. In this new station Joseph showed himself at once entirely at home; and all things went prosperously under his management; and such unlimited confidence did

his master place in him, that he scarcely troubled himself even to inquire about his concerns.

But now comes a critical point in the history. While Joseph was acquitting himself in the discharge of his official duties to the entire satisfaction of all concerned, Potiphar's wife formed a base plot for his ruin; which, though it resulted in a glorious triumph of his innocence, was the means not only of his being thrown out of his station, but of his being thrown into a prison. But here too Joseph immediately became a favourite. He seems to have been destined to be a man of authority, wherever Providence might place him; for he became to the keeper of the prison what he had previously been to Potiphar—a sort of general agent in the prison—an overseer of all its inmates.

About this time, two of the king's officers—his chief butler and chief baker, committed some offence by which they incurred his displeasure; and he issued a mandate for their being cast into prison; and the captain of the guard put them specially into Joseph's custody. These two men had each a troublesome dream, which Joseph took it upon himself to interpret: the interpreta

tion of the butler's dream was, that he should be almost immediately restored to the king's favour and the king's service; but that of the baker's was, that within about the same period, he should fall a victim to the king's resentment. And in each case the interpretation turned out to be true to the letter: the butler was restored to do the honours of the king's table; the baker was hung to grace the festivities of the king's birthday. Joseph, however, still remained in prison. He had indeed requested the butler, when he relieved his anxiety by interpreting his dream, to intercede with the king in his behalf, when he should be restored to favour; but he turned out to be a poor ungrateful creature, who thought nothing of Joseph afterwards, and probably cared not who might be in bondage, provided only he could himself have his liberty.

Not long after this, the king himself had two strange dreams, which he was as unable to interpret as his officers had been to interpret theirs; and now it occurs to the butler that *he* had once been placed in a similar predicament; and he remembers how he was relieved from his anxiety: and now, for the first time, and not for Joseph's

sake, but for the king's sake, he mentions Joseph's name to Pharaoh; or rather speaks of him as a young Hebrew, who had given a true interpretation of two dreams at least, and for aught he knew, might do the same of two more; and this intimation was sufficient to induce the king to send for him. Joseph, accordingly, as soon as he could change his raiment, came forth from his dungeon, and stood in the royal presence; and after an introduction which did great credit to Joseph's piety, the king related to him his two dreams; at the same time declaring that none of his magicians were able to interpret them. But Joseph immediately gave an interpretation: he assured the king that they pointed to seven years of plenty, which were to be succeeded by seven years of famine; and advised him to make provision, during the season of abundance, for the time of need. Pharaoh putting full confidence in Joseph's interpretation, and perceiving the uncommon wisdom which he evinced, forthwith appointed him ruler over all the land of Egypt, and caused him to move in the splendour becoming the highest official distinction.

And now Pharaoh's dream began to be fulfilled

in accordance with Joseph's interpretation. For the first seven years, the fields yielded an unprecedented abundance; and Joseph busied himself in laying up corn for the publick benefit; and the amount which he accumulated is said to have been "as the sand of the sea." But then came the seven years of famine; and the people every where were crying out for bread; and Joseph threw open his store houses, and dealt out to them according to their needs.

But it was not in Egypt only, but in the surrounding countries, that the famine prevailed; and Jacob and his family were likely to suffer in common with the rest of their countrymen. Hence Jacob, having heard that there was corn in Egypt, proposed to his sons to go down thither and procure a supply; and forthwith they all set off, with the exception of Benjamin, the youngest child and the darling of his father, whom he was unwilling to trust upon such an expedition; and the reason that he gave for his unwillingness— "lest mischief might befal him in the way,"— would seem to convey a touching allusion to the fate of his beloved Joseph. Having arrived in Egypt, they went first to present themselves

before the governour; and on approaching him, "they bowed themselves with their faces to the earth;" and then, though they suspected it not —then began to be fulfilled the famous dream, for which they had hated their brother, and finally sold him into bondage. Joseph the governour was so unlike Joseph the slave; Joseph in a palace was so different from Joseph in a pit, that it was not strange, especially as they had been separated from him for years, that they did not recognize him; though, as the change in *them* was much less, he immediately knew them to be his brethren;—yes, the very brethren who had deliberately cast him into a pit to die, and had taken him out of it only to be sold into perpetual servitude. Joseph's heart must have been full at the discovery; but still he commanded himself, and stood up before them with perfect dignity. With a view to try them and prove them, he charged them first with being spies, who had come to make their observations upon the nakedness of the land; and he assumed towards them a stern and forbidding manner. But they replied to him with great simplicity— "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of

one man in the land of Canaan, and behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." "Well then," says Joseph, "thus shall your sincerity be tested—let one of your number go and bring that youngest brother down hither, while the rest of you remain in prison; and the failure to bring him shall be the proof that you are spies." Then Joseph put them all into prison together, and they remained there three days; and at the end of that time, he so far varied his purpose, as to require one of them to be bound in prison as a hostage, and to permit the rest to go and carry corn to their families; charging them again to bring their youngest brother back as a proof that they were not spies. And now conscience began to bring up before them the image of their poor brother whom they had sold as a slave; and they had a most sorrowful conference with each other on the subject, directly in the presence of Joseph, who, they took for granted, did not understand them, while yet he really did understand every word; and he was even obliged to turn away from them to conceal his tears. But immediately he got command of himself again, and resumed his

conversation with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

Previous to their setting off on their journey home, Joseph gave directions not only that each man's sack should be filled with corn, but that each man's money should be put into his sack; and that provision should be furnished them adequate to their journey. After having proceeded a short distance, one of them having occasion to open his sack, discovered that his money had been restored: and this became a new source of anxiety to them; and while they were unable to conjecture the true explanation of it, their consciences were ready to construe it into an indication of evil. In this state of depression they reached home; and a most sorrowful story they had to tell to their aged father—the gloomiest part of which was, that they had entered into a covenant with the governour of Egypt, which required that his beloved Benjamin should be taken from him. Jacob's feelings instantly rose against this suggestion, and he gave vent to them in that memorable exclamation—"Me ye have bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me!"

But though Jacob, at first, utterly refused to yield to the importunity of his sons to let Benjamin go, yet, when the corn which they had brought up from Egypt was exhausted, and the famine waxed more and more severe, he finally consented, though with great reluctance, to withdraw his objections; and having charged them to take valuable presents to the governour, with a view to propitiate him, he commended them all to the protection and mercy of God; at the same time expressing his submission to the divine will in this remarkable language—"If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

The brethren, with Benjamin of their number, now went down into Egypt; and when, on their arrival, Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, he gave orders to the ruler of his house to bring them all home to dinner. But, instead of considering this as a favour and an honour, they saw in it the signs of alarming evil; they remembered the mysterious affair of the money being found in their sacks; and they suspected that the invitation to dinner would turn out to be a summons to a state of bondage. As they met the steward on their approach to the house, they began immediately to explain their own conduct, and assured

him that the affair of the money was all a mystery to them, and that they had not only brought it all back, but had brought other money, with a view to make still further purchases; upon which the steward instantly put to flight all their apprehensions, and brought out Simeon, with whom no doubt they must have had a most agreeable meeting.

At length Joseph returned; and they met him with the present, and bowed in his presence to do him honour: and he inquired concerning the health of their father, and obtained from them the information he wished. But when he saw his brother Benjamin—his own mother's son, it was more than he could bear; his fraternal sensibilities, for the time, got the better of him; and he retired into his chamber and remained there, till the first gush of feeling was over. Then he came out of his chamber and ordered dinner to be served; and, greatly to the astonishment of his guests, he arranged them at the table according to their respective ages, and gave to Benjamin a portion larger by five times than to any of the rest. He himself sat down to a different table, as the Egyptians were not permitted to eat with the Hebrews;

but the history informs us that "they drank and were merry together."

But Joseph had not yet sufficiently proved his brethren. He therefore commanded his steward, as they were about to depart, to fill the men's sacks with food, and to put every man's money into the mouth of his sack, and to put his own silver cup into the sack of the youngest; and the command was faithfully obeyed. Soon after they had taken their departure, the steward, by Joseph's direction, proceeded in great haste after them, and overtook them, and charged them with having in their possession the cup from which the governour drank, and by means of which he conducted his divinations. Astonished at the charge, and conscious of their own innocence in the matter, they challenged an examination of their sacks, declaring, at the same time, that if it were found upon any one of them, *he* should die, and the rest should go into bondage. To their utter consternation, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; and as soon as the discovery was made, they rent their clothes, and returned with heavy hearts to the city. And then they prostrated themselves before Joseph; and Judah, who spake in behalf of the whole

company, acknowledged that God had found out their iniquity, and that they were all fairly committed to a state of bondage. But Joseph said, "God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Then Judah expostulated with the governour, and went over with the story of his father's anxieties and sorrows—how reluctant his father had been to part with Benjamin, and how he had pledged himself that his darling child should return to him in safety; and finally, he asked it as a privilege that *he* might remain in bondage in place of his younger brother, lest his aged father should go down to the grave under the weight of his afflictions.

By this time Joseph had sufficiently tested their state of feeling; and more than that—he had become so much dissolved by Judah's speech, that it was impossible for him to suppress his emotions: and now he clears the room of all but his brethren, with a view to reveal to them a most astounding secret. Here is the governour of Egypt, standing before these apparently unfortunate men, with something upon his heart that makes him weep.

What he is about to say, they cannot even conjecture; but at length it comes out amidst tears and sobs—"*I am Joseph;*" and the very first question he asked, was one that showed that the son had not been lost in the governour—"Doth my father yet live?" No wonder that the revelation overpowered his brethren, and that their lips were sealed, so that they could not answer him. But Joseph endeavoured instantly to quiet their apprehensions, by assuring them that he was their brother still, and by referring to the gracious ends which Providence had accomplished through their instrumentality; and then he directed them to go up to Canaan and bring down their father, and their families, and all that they had, for a residence in Egypt; that he might have the privilege of ministering to their wants and nourishing them upon the royal bounty. Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck; and he embraced them all in turn, and wept upon them; and after these ample pledges of his affection, they gathered confidence to converse with him. The news was immediately communicated to Pharaoh, and he cordially seconded Joseph's wishes; and the

brethren having received valuable presents from Joseph, were forthwith despatched to Canaan, to bring down their father and their respective families to reside in the land of Egypt. It is worthy of remark that, before they set out on their journey, Joseph charged them that they should not fall out by the way—a caution which was very naturally suggested by the experience he had formerly had of their tempers, and which was a delicate way of reminding them of the past, and suggesting matter for reflection and ground for repentance.

Agreeably to Joseph's directions, his brethren proceeded immediately to Canaan; and it is scarcely necessary to say that they approached their father with far better news and far lighter hearts than when they returned from their former journey. Instead of bringing him the intelligence that Joseph is dead, or that Benjamin must be taken from him, as they had done on former occasions, they come with the grateful tidings that Joseph is alive, and is governour of the whole land of Egypt. At first the good old man fainted; for the news seemed to him too good to be true. But when he actually saw the waggons

which Joseph had sent to convey him and his family to their new home, "his spirit revived, and he said—It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

In pursuance of this resolution, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made for the journey, the whole family set off for Egypt. And when the news of their approach reached Joseph, he made ready his chariot, and went out as far as Goshen to meet his father. Conceive now, if you can, what a meeting that must have been! Joseph fell upon his father's neck—the father who had loved him so much, and from whom he had been separated so long—and kissed him and wept; while the father gave utterance to his full heart in such language as this—"Now, let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." "The coat which I gave thee in thy childhood, was brought to me by thy brethren stained with blood, as an evidence that thou wast dead; and my heart has a thousand times bled, as my imagination has lingered upon what I supposed might have been thy dying scene; and yet, after all, here thou art, my son, not only alive, but in affluence and

honour. God's goodness overwhelms me. It is enough—I am ready to die, O Lord, for I have seen thy salvation."

Joseph immediately informed Pharaoh of the arrival of his family, and then he took five of his brethren, and presented them to him; and Pharaoh had an interview with them; after which, he brought up his aged and venerable father, and introduced him to the king; and Jacob appeared on the occasion with all that simplicity, dignity and piety, which became a prophet and a patriarch; and on retiring from the presence of Pharaoh, he gave him his blessing. Joseph now, with the consent and advice of the king, appointed his father and brethren their residence in the most desirable part of the land of Egypt, and there nourished them with fraternal and filial tenderness, while he proceeded in the execution of his public trust with his accustomed fidelity.

After Jacob had been for some time in his new residence, sustained and cheered by the bounty of his son, intelligence was brought to Joseph that his father was sick; and straightway he hastened to his bedside, that he might minister to his last wants and receive his parting blessing. After he

was dead he manifested the deepest grief at his departure, and, with a gush of sorrow and affection, even embraced his corpse. When the usual period of public mourning had been fulfilled, agreeably to a promise which he had made to his father before his death, he caused his remains to be carried back to Canaan that his final resting place might be with his fathers.

Shortly after the death of Jacob, Joseph's brethren began to fear, that, since their father was out of the way, it might occur to Joseph to take revenge on them for the cruel treatment which he had received at their hands in former years; and so apprehensive were they of this, that they sent a messenger to him humbly imploring his forgiveness and continued protection. Joseph was deeply affected by the communication, and assured them that they should receive nothing from him but expressions of fraternal kindness. And this promise he ever most sacredly fulfilled. At length the time of *his* departure drew near; and having taken an oath of his brethren, that they would carry *his* bones also up into the land of Egypt, he died at the age of a hundred and ten years, and his body was embalmed after the manner of the Egyptians.

LETTERS

TO

YOUNG MEN.

PART I.

SOURCES OF DANGER TO YOUNG MEN.

LETTER I.

DANGER FROM EXCESSIVE PARENTAL INDULGENCE.

The growing conviction which I have had for years of the importance of those interests which are soon to be devolved upon the young men of the present generation, has, at different times, brought me almost to the determination of addressing to them a short series of letters designed to impress them with a sense of their obligations, and to aid in the general formation of their character. I have, however, been deterred from executing, or even forming, a definite purpose on this subject, by the consideration that many wise and excellent

men have already written books of counsel to the young, to which they can readily gain access; and that any attempt which I might make would result in nothing better than a repetition of things which had often been more attractively and more impressively said before. It occurred to me, however, lately, as I was reading the touching and beautiful story of Joseph, that there is much in it that deserves the most attentive consideration, especially of every young man; and in this thought originated the purpose, which I have now set myself to execute — of endeavouring to render this scripture narrative subservient to the best interests of the young men of the present day. Still, my young friends, I have no expectation of offering any thing to your consideration that is substantially new: the utmost that I can hope is, that I may give increasing effect to the counsels which I shall suggest, by incorporating them with a story, which, in respect to the interest of its incidents and the beauty of its descriptions, is universally acknowledged to be unrivalled even in the sacred scriptures. I have given you an outline of the history, that you may the more readily see how the various points which I shall

have occasion to bring out, connect themselves with it; though I hardly need say that you will do yourselves great injustice, if, instead of being satisfied with any outline, you do not study, till you have rendered perfectly familiar to you, the original record.

You can hardly read this narrative without being struck with the fact, that Joseph was often placed in circumstances of great peril—circumstances strikingly analogous to those in which young men are not unfrequently placed at the present day. Indeed, it is in such a condition as this that the history first presents him to us—in jeopardy from the indiscreet favouritism of his father. It was certainly an unworthy partiality, which Jacob discovered towards him, in the affair of the coat: it was fitted to excite not only the envy of his brethren but his own pride; and if it did not produce the latter effect as well as the former, we must attribute it to Joseph's well balanced character, in connection perhaps with a special divine interposition in his behalf. There was, after all, some apology for Jacob in this matter; for not only was he far advanced in life, but Joseph was evidently distinguished above his

other children, by his intellectual and moral endowments; and withal he was the son of his beloved Rachel, who had not been long dead, and whose memory he still cherished with the strongest affection.

Many parents beside Jacob are chargeable with indiscreet preferences in the treatment of their children. I will not dwell here upon the evil effect that results to those who, like the sons of the patriarch, regard themselves as wronged out of the place that really belongs to them in the affection of their parents; but I will advert only to the evil that is likely to accrue to those who are the subjects of an unreasonable partiality —or rather who are the subjects of excessive indulgence, whether there be any preference manifested in respect to them or not. I say, then, every young man who, either from having no parents, or from having indiscreet parents, is left in the enjoyment of an undue degree of liberty, is in danger—imminent danger, according to the nature or the strength of his ruling passion.

There is danger that a young man, who is suffered to grow up in a great measure uncon-

trolled, will form a habit of idleness. We do not find that children, if left to themselves, choose labour: and where they form the habit, it is usually the result of parental instruction, and counsel, and perhaps authority, rather than of their own taste or inclination. You may look all the world over, and you will find, with few exceptions, that young persons who are allowed to do just as they please, show themselves disposed to do very little—at least little to any good purpose; and the consequence is, that, at no distant period, they have a confirmed habit of idleness which renders them little better than cumberers of the ground.

They are exposed also, from the same cause, to neglect the culture of their minds, and thus to appear on the stage of life with a claim to respectability, and with means of usefulness, far less, than it might have been their privilege to enjoy. There are indeed some minds constituted with such decided intellectual tendencies, that they require direction merely, without any external exciting influence; but the great mass of youthful minds will in a measure stagnate—certainly will not realize a legitimate develop-

ment,—unless they are quickened as well as guided by an influence from without. You may see this point strikingly illustrated in almost any literary institution—the patient, the diligent, the successful students, you will generally find to be those who have been accustomed to the influence of suitable restraint; while the indolent and disgraced, who hold their places by mere sufferance, are *as* generally from the ranks of those who are left from the beginning with little that approaches to parental control. I do not say that a young man may not evince fine powers, and yet be suffered even from childhood, to take his own way; and in some instances, owing to a peculiarly happy mental constitution, or to a specially favouring Providence, *that* way may prove the right one, and he may be early matured for extensive usefulness; but I do say that, in all ordinary cases of extreme parental indulgence, even the best powers remain to a great extent uncultivated; and a disgraceful ignorance is always found to hang upon the heels of an indolent inaction.

Young men who are excessively indulged, are in danger, still farther, of contracting a habit of extravagance in their pecuniary expenditures.

Especially is this true, where the parent possesses, or is supposed to possess, a large estate; for let a young man once get into his head the idea that he has money enough at his command, and that, however others may find it necessary to labour for a living, he has nothing to do but sit still and enjoy an estate made ready to his hands—and you will find that, in the act of taking up this idea, he becomes a prodigal, if not a profligate. It often happens that this painful result is realized, where there is only a show of wealth without the substance; and the poor indulged young man who had formed a habit of extravagance on the presumption that his father was as rich as he seemed to be, is at length mortified and shocked to find that what he regarded substantial wealth was mere pretension, and that his extravagant tastes are in miserable keeping with what turns out to be his actual condition. When this unwelcome discovery is made, the danger is, that, instead of leading to better habits, it will lead to other habits of evil, with a view to keep up those which have been already formed.

I will only add that there is danger, from this source, that young men will grow up to be the

victims of unrestrained passion. The passions constitute a most important part of our moral nature; and if they are not kept under in the beginning, they will inevitably gain the ascendancy, and, at no distant period, become the tyrants of the soul. Take, for instance, the passion of anger—or, if you please, what is commonly called spirit in a child—let it be subject to suitable restraint and developed under the influence of right instruction, and there will be nothing to be feared from it—it may prove an element of dignity and strength and usefulness in the future character. But let it be unrestrained in its exercise—let it blaze forth in foolish and violent acts without meeting a reproof—and you need not wonder if it shall mature itself by and by into savage ferocity or black malignity—need not wonder if, even before the age of manhood has arrived, some desperate act shall draw after it a fearful punishment, to be endured in a dungeon or on a gallows.

It may occur to you that the subject of this letter might more fittingly be urged on the consideration of parents and guardians of youth, than of young men themselves; inasmuch as the duty

to which it points devolves primarily upon *them*. But let me say, if your parents err ever so much in this matter, you are still moral agents, and you have no right to be misled by them. What though in the weakness sometimes incident to parental affection, they may leave you to choose your own course, and may seem to take for granted that whatever you do, is, from the very circumstance of your doing it, right;—you are to regard this as a snare which they have unintentionally laid for you, and to beware that you fall not into it. If you are permitted to choose between idleness and activity, be active. If between the culture and the neglect of your intellect, be studious. If between a habit of economy and of extravagance, be economical. If between the subjection of your passions to your reason, and the domination of your passions over your reason, let reason assert and maintain the control to which she is entitled. Remember that you are to form a character for yourselves; and that you have no right to suffer even a misguided parental affection to stand between you and a virtuous, honourable, useful life.

LETTER II.

DANGER FROM INJURIOUS TREATMENT.

THERE is no topic with which the name of Joseph more immediately connects itself than this. You have seen in the brief sketch of his life that has been presented, that, while he was yet a harmless and lovely boy, he became the object of envy and persecution from his brethren;—that they at first formed a deliberate purpose to murder him, which gave way only to another scarcely less horrible—that of selling him as a slave;—that they actually did sell him into an ignoble bondage, with the full expectation that he would never meet his father again, and that the first relief which he would find from his degraded condition would be in the grave:—and all this, it is to be remembered, for no other offence on his part, than that of having had what his brethren considered a bad dream, and of being the object of his father's special regard. And notwith-

standing these were the most memorable acts of unkindness toward him of which we have any knowledge, yet we find, as we advance in his history, that his brethren were not alone in their evil treatment of him—the wife of Potiphar, because she found that she could not ruin him in one way, resolved that she would ruin him in another, and by a base and vindictive fabrication caused him, for a time, to be shut up in prison; and the butler, whose anxiety he relieved by interpreting his dream, and who promised to use his influence for his being set at liberty, ungratefully forgot his promise, and, but for a casual occurrence in which the king was immediately interested, might never afterwards have mentioned Joseph's name. If, taking the whole of his life together, Joseph had more friends, and received more testimonies of favour, both publick and private, than fall to the lot of most men, it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that very few have been the objects of such marked injustice and persecution, especially from their own brethren.

It would be strange, my young friends, even though you may have lived but a few years in the world, if your brief history does not already sup-

ply some cases in which you regard yourselves as having been the subjects of injurious treatment; and it would be yet more strange, if this should be true of you when you reach your maturity. I am well aware that young men are generally too prone to fancy injuries where none are intended; and not unfrequently a merely imaginary insult awakens a spirit of complaint or retaliation, which, in turn, is visited with some substantial injury; and however unjustifiable the infliction of the injury may be, the person who has needlessly and foolishly provoked it, must at least come in for a share of the guilt. But, leaving out of view these cases, there are many in which young men are the subjects of injurious treatment, where their own previous conduct has been altogether exemplary. Sometimes their just rights are unreasonably infringed by the avarice of their employers; and an amount of service is required of them which it is altogether unreasonable—perhaps impossible, that they should render. Sometimes their necessary wants are overlooked, and the pledge that has been made to their parents to provide for them suitable food and clothing, is wantonly violated. And sometimes too their feel-

ings are continually fretted or even lacerated by a spirit of fault finding—when they have done their best, they are still met with sullen looks, if not with reproachful and angry words. And it is not merely from those in whose service they are, that young men are liable to receive offensive treatment, but from each other also; and perhaps the danger is greater in the latter case than in the former. For the fact that they are nearly of the same age, brings them into more immediate contact; they feel a greater freedom both in respect to their words and actions; and that which begins in sport often terminates in an affray. In cases of this kind, it usually happens indeed that the blame is shared by both parties; and yet it is by no means uncommon for a young man to become the object of persecution from his fellows, without having given even a semblance of a cause for their ill will—nay, this has often occurred for no other reason, than that he would not be a party to their evil plans, or a screen to their evil deeds.

It is proper to remark here, that there are many evils to which you may be exposed from the injurious treatment that is exercised towards you, in respect to which you need give yourselves no

serious trouble. You may be cheated out of your property, and thus your means of worldly comfort may be greatly abridged. Your innocent and perhaps praiseworthy actions may be grossly misrepresented, and, in consequence of this, your good name may, for some time, seem actually to lie under a cloud. You may be prevented, by sheer malignity, from occupying some post of influence and usefulness, for which you have the most ample qualifications, and upon which your eye and your heart have long been fixed. Each of these you may regard as a serious evil—and so indeed it may be; and yet, after all, it is nothing from which, in the issue, you have any thing to fear. If God, in his providence, suffers these things to befall you, He has wise reasons for doing so; and if it is not your own fault, you will, ere long, find occasion to rejoice in them. He has constituted things in such a manner, that, in all ordinary cases, the oppressor and the unjust man on the one hand, and the sufferer from oppression and injustice on the other, each finds his proper place,—and that too, at no distant period. I could point you to many cases strikingly illustrative of this feature in the divine

economy; but I will only say, if you are yourselves the sufferers, fear not. Wait a little, and in all probability the dishonour done to your character will be retrieved; the darkness which had seemed to settle around you will pass away. But even if it should be otherwise—if the injustice of your fellow creatures should prevail against you to your dying day,—if you have suffered with a right spirit, you will find your remedy and your recompense then, in the joys of a better and nobler existence.

But there is another class of evils to which you are exposed from the injurious treatment you may receive, which are far more formidable, and against which you have reason to guard with most vigilant concern—evils, I mean, as connected with your own temper and conduct. Suffer me to mention a few of them.

Your first danger on the reception of an injury, especially if it be an unlooked for injury, is, that you will become unduly excited, and in this state of feeling say or do things, which will at least require to be repented of, and possibly subject you to the most serious inconvenience. All this may be distinct from any definite and deliberate pur-

pose of evil—it may be a mere gust of passion, which may subside in a moment, though possibly the moment through which it lasts, may be remembered with bitter regret, so long as any thing earthly is the subject of recollection.

But the danger is, that the consequences of your having been injuriously treated will not stop here—that, instead of dismissing the subject from your mind, to be recalled only as an occasion for self condemnation and repentance, you will brood over it, magnifying its features of provocation and insult, till the dark spirit of revenge gets thorough possession of your bosom. Be it so, that, from fear or from some selfish considerations, you are prevented from even forming a purpose to injure the person who has injured you—but still you wish you could do it with impunity; and you are hoping that others who are more courageous than you, *may* do it; or that God may do it by sending some great providential calamity; and you stand ready to begin your exultation, the moment your enemy begins to writhe. You are like one who has swallowed a living viper, and feels its deadly corrosions every moment. By a habit of self-command, you may so far control yourself, that

even those who scrutinize your conduct the most closely, shall not know or suspect what is passing within you; but nothing can make you happy—nothing can save you from being wretched, till this enemy of your peace is effectually dislodged.

Remember, further, that the spirit of revenge never occupies the bosom alone. While it creates an atmosphere in which all gentle and kind and virtuous dispositions die, it quickens into life every latent seed of evil, and even attracts to itself fierce auxiliaries from the abodes of darkness. I do not say that a revengeful man may not play the hypocrite, and pass for something that he is not; but I do say that, if you could penetrate the interior of his heart, you would find it only a region of darkness and storms—of thorns and briers, that is nigh unto cursing.

But it is not always, nor even generally, that the revengeful spirit is thus kept in check: in most instances where it is thoroughly aroused, it never rests until it is satiated. Perhaps it breaks out at once in some desperate act, which meets its punishment in years spent in the penitentiary. Perhaps it seems, for the time, to take little note of the injury; and months or even

years may pass away, and yet no hostile demonstration be made; but this whole period may prove to have been occupied with the preparation for some fiendlike assault; and the assault may prove the more terrible, from the fact of its having been so long delayed. What a fearful bearing on this subject has the history of duelling! Many a young man, under some slight sense of injury, has sent a challenge, which has resulted in his going into the field, to come back a murderer, or to be brought back a corpse. Besides these greater evils which *may* follow in the train of injurious treatment, I may mention that there is danger also, that it will beget a morbid distrust and dislike of mankind in general. Let a young man, with the little experience which he has had of the world, meet with some signal instance or instances of injustice or cruelty from those from whom he had a right to expect better things—especially as in the case of Joseph, from near relatives, and it will be strange, if it does not lead him to judge others with undue severity, and even sometimes to withhold confidence without any adequate reason. Thus his disposition becomes poisoned, his habits morose, and his social

relations a channel of little good either to his friends or the world.

If you would avoid the evils at which I have hinted in this letter, make up your mind that you cannot long escape injurious treatment of some kind, and resolve that you will be governed, in view of it, only by those rules which Christianity prescribes.

LETTER III.

DANGER FROM LIVING AWAY FROM HOME.

It was the lot of Joseph, while he was yet a mere stripling, to be removed from beneath the watchful eye of his father, and to be thrown, at that most critical period of life, altogether among strangers. Little indeed did his father imagine, when he sent him out to make a friendly visit to his brethren, with a view to bring him tidings concerning their welfare, that such was to be his

lot: he expected that, in a short time, he would be with him again, and that he should have the privilege, for years, of exerting a direct influence in the formation of his character. But a result very different from this had Providence ordained. The separation which both Joseph and his father supposed would be very brief, proved to be a separation for years; and those too, years, in respect to Joseph, in which a well-directed parental influence is of the greatest moment.

Notwithstanding the circumstances in which the early separation of Joseph from his father took place, may have never had their parallel in human experience, the separation itself was only an occurrence which is incidental to a large portion of our young men, several years before they leave their minority. Some are placed, at a very early period, at boarding schools, and, a few years later, are sent to college. Others go from home to learn a mechanical trade; others, to acquire a mercantile education; and others still, to travel—perhaps with, perhaps without, a companion, in foreign countries. Though there are doubtless many cases in which young men leave the parental roof prematurely, or for pur-

poses which cannot be justified, yet it seems to be the ordinance of Providence that, in most cases, after a few of their earlier years are past, they should be thrown, more or less, away from home, with reference to their ulterior and permanent arrangements. A large proportion of those who have passed the age of sixteen or seventeen, are in circumstances which make them only occasional visitors, rather than stated residents, at the domestic mansion. Without complaining of this arrangement of providence—for a providential arrangement it certainly is—I maintain that there are great dangers incident to it;—dangers against which every young man should be on his guard, as he values his own best interests, and the hopes and the happiness of those who are most dear to him.

As I suppose myself, for the present, to be addressing young men who either are, or are soon to be, in the circumstances to which I have referred, let me say, in the first place, that your danger results, in no small degree, from the fact that, while the temptations which you have to encounter, may generally be supposed to be increased by a residence away from home, there

is a proportional diminution of those external influences which are fitted to enable you to meet them successfully.

No situation indeed can be found, in which a young man will be entirely exempt from temptation; and yet perhaps there is none in which fewer temptations will meet him, than that which he holds as the natural member of an enlightened and virtuous family. The mere fact of a change from this—of any change which he may make—will be likely to have in it the elements of danger; for it will almost of course give some new direction, or some new impulse, to his faculties and feelings; and with the evil tendencies that belong to human nature, there is always a chance at least that it will be less for good than for evil. In addition to this, it is more than probable that the new circumstances into which he is thrown by the change, will have far more in them that will invite to evil than he has been accustomed to find in his previous situation. Perhaps from the quiet of a country home he goes to reside in the city, where temptations of some kind or other meet him on every side: here especially the path to vice—the path to ruin, is bestrewed with flowers;

and the danger is that he will have started in it, and have advanced too far to be withdrawn, while yet he has scarcely a conception of the fatal direction in which he is travelling. No matter what his occupation may be—whether it be that of a scholar, or a merchant's clerk, or an apprentice to a mechanic, it will have its peculiar temptations—temptations differing, in some respects, from those to which he has been previously accustomed.

Now view the subject in another aspect, and see how the danger is heightened from the diminution of those influences which are fitted to neutralize the power of temptation. There is nothing like a healthful domestic influence to guard a young man from the snares that beset him; or, if he has begun to meditate evil, nothing like this to destroy the incipient purpose. Suppose he has yielded to temptation in a single instance—has violated the convictions of his conscience and the often expressed wishes of his parents, by some evil deed which is known only to himself, and perhaps one or two of his associates;—do you imagine that he will be able to meet the eye of his parents, as if he were

conscious of having clean hands and a pure heart? Rely on it, though they, in their ignorance, may administer no reproof, yet his own conscience will speak in their behalf, and convict him of monstrous filial ingratitude; and there is some reason to hope that the result will be a resolute determination to be found no more in the path of the tempter. But in all ordinary cases, it is to be presumed that a suitable parental influence will prevent, in a great measure, the evil to which I have here referred; or, if vicious tendencies begin to develop themselves, that parental vigilance will be quick to discover them, and parental fidelity prompt and earnest to reprove and correct them. And besides the influence of parents, there is often the influence of other members of the family, particularly of sisters, that is fitted to check his wayward propensities, and save him from rushing into the haunts of vice; for a sister's voice will often be heard and heeded, where any other voice, except that of a mother, may plead in vain. But if, as we are obliged to admit, even in these most propitious circumstances, there are many young men who not only betray wayward tendencies, but wander irrecoverably, how much

greater the danger, where these favouring influences do not exist;—where the individuals are, in a great measure, beyond the reach of parental watchfulness and counsel and restraint;—where they may yield to their perverse inclinations, and not be obliged, the next hour, to meet the eye which, of all eyes on earth, is most dreadful to a guilty child! Perhaps, too, they were accustomed at home to circle the altar of prayer, morning and evening, whereas now they may be cut off from this privilege also; and who does not see that the very habit of mingling in such an exercise, even where there may be much less of the spirit of devotion than could be desired, is adapted to fortify the mind in some measure against temptation; and that a sudden transition to a prayerless domestic circle, must almost inevitably weaken the barriers which a religious education may have imposed against unreasonable and sinful indulgences.

There is, also, if I mistake not, an influence favourable to virtuous dispositions in that interchange of social and kindly and affectionate feeling, that is peculiar to one's own family circle. This, of course, takes for granted, that the family

is, in some degree, what it should be—a nursery of all those good affections which enter into the true idea of *home*;—for it is quite possible that a child may have *such* a home, that the greatest blessing that can come to him, may be that of a permanent separation from it. But, where the members of a family cultivate toward each other a truly benevolent spirit, and cherish a warm interest in each other's happiness, and a tender sympathy in each other's sorrows, it is certainly a privilege to be one of them—not merely on account of the rational and elevated enjoyment of which each becomes a sharer, but especially on account of the influence which is hereby exerted in communicating a general refinement and elevation to the character. But, let a young man be taken out of such a domestic circle, and carried into one to which he is in no way allied, and in which perhaps there is no interest felt in him apart from that which is felt in the payment for his board, and you see at once there is danger that his generous affections will soon begin to stagnate, and that a selfish, not to say an unsocial, spirit will gradually creep over him.

Moreover, a young man in the circumstances

which I am supposing, is in danger of contracting a false sense of independence. Hitherto he has always been within the reach of his mother's eye, or his father's hand; and perhaps he has never even begun to learn how to resist parental counsels, or break away from parental restraints; and possibly it may have never occurred to him that he was capable of doing either. But the change in his condition has revealed to him his mistake. He finds himself with new ideas of liberty; and with the change in his ideas, there quickly comes a corresponding change in his conduct. He demonstrates to himself his independence, by treating the good principles with which his mind had been stored, as childish and unworthy prejudices. The feeling which has got possession of him is both unsuitable and unlovely; and its practical development can be nothing but unmixed evil. Many a parent whose child has returned to him after a temporary separation, has been shocked and distressed at observing *that* in his manner which has indicated this painful change; and he has been afraid to inquire concerning the last chapter in his history,

lest it should be a record of evil doings that would make his heart bleed.

In the course of my observation, numerous cases have occurred, which furnish a sad illustration of the danger which it has been the design of this letter to set before you. One in particular occurs to me at this moment, of which I will give you the outline, though it is only one of a class, to which it would not be easy to assign a limit. I knew a lad who entered one of our colleges, a few years since, at the age of fourteen, who, up to that period, had always been under the immediate care of his mother—a mother, eminent both for her intelligence and piety. He possessed natural attractions to which few young men, whom I have ever known, could lay claim. His form was perfect symmetry; his countenance was brightness mingled with loveliness; his voice was melody; and his manners the very perfection of grace and beautiful simplicity. He was a fine scholar—equally at home in every branch to which his attention was directed. And more than that—he had a high sense of moral rectitude, and was understood to be very exact in his habits of devotion. But he was removed from parental

influence, and the shock was greater than he could bear. Notwithstanding vigorous efforts were made to save him, nothing could arrest him in the downward way. From being an example of industry, he soon settled into a drone; his habit of respectful modesty gave way to a revolting impudence—his habit of sobriety to intemperance—his habit of devotion to profaneness; and within a few short months, he was transformed into a thorough profligate. He was dismissed from college, as one whose pestiferous influence could no longer be tolerated; he passed a few years as a vagabond, and then died a drunkard's death. While he lived at home, he was an example of all that was virtuous and lovely; but when he went *from* home, he yielded to temptation and was ruined.

My young friends, whom Providence has separated from the direct influences of a Christian home, let such instances as this be to you as a volume of warning. May God enable you so to realize your danger, and so to act in view of it, that *your* history may hereafter be referred to, as illustrating the triumph and the rewards of virtue in trying circumstances.

LETTER IV.

DANGER FROM LIVING IN A CORRUPT STATE OF SOCIETY.

In the preceding letter, your attention was directed to the peculiar temptations incident to the condition of Joseph, as living away from home, and beyond the immediate range of parental influence. But this was not all. It is possible that a youth may leave one good home for another; and however much he may lose in being beyond the reach of a parent's voice that used to counsel and instruct him, and lead him to the throne of the heavenly grace, that loss may, in a measure at least, be made up by the religious privileges incident to his new condition. Very different, however, was the case of Joseph. By the same course of events that separated him from the home of his childhood, he was thrown among strangers, who, at first, had no other interest in him than they had in any common slave; and,

more than that, they were idolaters—they were ignorant of the God which Joseph had been taught to worship, and offered their blind and senseless homage to a stupid animal. And we may judge something of what the standard of morals was, by what we know of the morality of Pagan nations at the present day. The multitude were false, sensual, cruel; and the darkness, which subsequently constituted one of the Egyptian plagues, was but a feeble representation of that gross moral darkness in which the land was now enveloped. Think of a youth, of the age of Joseph, being thrown into circumstances like these, without a single friend to point him to the right, or to admonish him of the wrong; and say whether you can conceive of a situation that supplies a severer ordeal to youthful virtue.

And yet, this condition in its substantial features, is the condition of many a young man of the present day—some of you no doubt into whose hands these pages may fall, will recognize it as your own. In the best state of society, there is wickedness enough to constitute just ground for watchfulness against corrupting influences; but there are places that are signalized by the preva-

lence of vice—places in Christian countries—even in our own country—in which virtue can scarcely gain a lodgment, and scenes of base intrigue or reckless violence make part of the history of almost every day. As a general rule, I would say that, in the selection of a permanent residence, you should pay much respect to the consideration whether the place be characterized by a regard to morality and religion; for you may rest assured that any pecuniary advantages which it may afford, will be but an ill compensation for the evil of being constantly subjected to a corrupting influence. But there are cases in which young men have been *born* in these unpropitious circumstances, and it is almost a matter of course that they continue in them, at least during their earlier years. And then again, there are various events of providence which may occur to remove them from a more to a less favoured region, to say nothing of the fact that they may be led to make such a change from conscientious considerations—from a desire to place themselves in a situation where they may labour to the best advantage in the work of reformation. Where this latter motive operates, it may be regarded as furnishing, of itself,

some security against the influence of temptation; and yet so much of weakness is there pertaining even to human virtue, that no individual—especially no young man—who ventures into the circumstances to which I am referring, can be so sure that he shall stand, but that he has good reason to take heed lest he fall.

That you may be duly impressed with the danger that pertains to this condition, consider, in the first place, that it supposes the absence of those encouragements and restraints which belong to a different state of society, and in which virtue finds her chief support. Perhaps the sabbath, instead of being regarded with the reverence which it deserves, is prostituted to worldly and sinful purposes—to purposes of gain, or amusement, or sensuality. Perhaps the institutions of Christianity do not exist at all, or exist only in name—if there is preaching, it may be "another gospel" that is preached, upon which God's blessing cannot be expected to rest. And public opinion, which, when properly directed, is mighty for good, may be ill directed, and therefore, instead of being a barrier against evil, may be a powerful auxiliary to it. If you are already established in the ways

of truth and virtue, how much are you indebted to the benign influences of Christian institutions; or if you have been preserved from open vice, and have been enabled to maintain a fair moral character, are you sure that you would have attained even this, independently of the thousand nameless influences which a pure Christianity has brought to bear upon you? Suppose, in either case, all these influences had been withdrawn—suppose the sabbath, and the preaching of the gospel, and a correct public sentiment, had done nothing for you, in the way of restraining, or directing, or encouraging—who can say but that you, who are now walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, might have been open apostates; and you who are contributing to the strength and happiness of society by your generally discreet and exemplary deportment, might have been miserable profligates or scoffing infidels?

But there are evil influences of a more positive kind, connected with the state of society which I am supposing. Particularly, there is the influence of corrupt example, which is alike insidious and deadly in its operation; and which, from the few checks that the existing state of things supplies,

is likely to become an all pervading element. A little reflection will discover to you the process by which it operates. First, the mind becomes familiarized to vice; and such are the evil tendencies of our nature, that familiarity rather inspires attachment, than awakens disgust. The moral perceptions and sensibilities gradually become blunted; the dread of being singular operates with diminished power; resolutions of amendment grow weaker, and apologies are more readily admitted, until, at no distant period, the doors of the heart are thrown open to welcome every temptation. No one can know the power of this influence, who has never been exposed to it; nor can any one know how much of vigilance and resolution are necessary to withstand it, who has not made the experiment.

I must be allowed to say, in this connection, that there is no species of sinful indulgence, to which the circumstances which I am supposing more strongly solicit young men, than sensuality. Never was there a more striking illustration of this, than occurred in the temptation which Joseph had to encounter from the profligate wife of his master. She not only invited but urged him into

"the way to hell"; and because he resisted her cruel solicitations, she took vengeance upon him, at the expense of an abominable falsehood. The animal appetites make part of our original constitution; and when kept in due subjection, they accomplish an important end; but when they are suffered to act the part of tyrants, they constitute a most degrading ministry in the soul, and as sure as the ordinance of heaven changes not, ultimately destroy both soul and body in hell. There is scarcely a vice that does not find its legitimate aliment in sensuality. While, by its own direct influence, it changes the man into a brute, it puts other principles of his nature into operation, by means of which he becomes also a fiend. While I am writing this paragraph, there is the utmost excitement prevailing in a neighbouring city, in consequence of a most brutal murder that has just occurred as the immediate result of licentious indulgence; and the hand of retributive justice is, at this moment, searching for the wretched murderer, to visit upon him the punishment which his crimes have merited. No language could adequately set forth the danger to which young men are exposed from the vice to which I here

refer. It is a subject upon which I cannot dwell; though I am willing to hope that this passing allusion may serve to awaken or quicken both your reflection and sensibility in respect to its importance. If other vices have slain their thousands, it is not too much to say that this has slain its ten thousands.

And while there is much to be feared, in this state of things, from the general influence of evil example, and the frequent solicitations to criminal indulgence, there is perhaps scarcely less danger from the direct efforts that will be made to propagate errour, and thus to corrupt the very fountains of moral feeling. Go into whatever place you will, where religion is treated with general neglect, and its institutions have little, if any thing, more than a nominal existence, and you will find, almost of course, that there are veterans in infidelity as well as veterans in vice; and it is more than you have a right to expect, that men who hate the gospel should keep silence respecting it. The spirit of malignity in such a case is almost sure to find vent through the lips; and hence infidel arguments are framed, and infidel jests circulated; and while there will be

many who will stand ready to do service to the cause according to their ability, there will be some who will be regarded as oracles, or at least as the expounders of oracles, at whose feet the multitude will sit with persevering and fatal docility. I have in my eye, at this moment, a neighbourhood with which I was familiar years ago, where, owing to some peculiar circumstances, a large part of the population had come under a strangely demoralizing influence. And that was a soil where infidelity grew in rank luxuriance; and while it was itself, to a great extent, the occasion of the prevailing immorality, it reproduced itself continually, not only by the direct inculcation of its own doctrines, but by the habits of practical irreligion which it aimed to establish. Well do I remember that, while there were a score of people who, in their deep ignorance, could jeer at Christianity, and brand it as a cheat, and its votaries as knaves or fools, there were some two or three who were regarded as the greater lights of infidelity, and one in particular, who greatly exceeded the rest, if not in the fierceness of his malignity, at least in the extent of his knowledge. He was the acknowledged expounder of Hume

and Gibbon, of Rousseau and Voltaire; and perhaps his favourite author, after all, was Paine; for nothing was more palatable to those to whom he discoursed, than the vulgar and blasphemous jests which make up the "Age of Reason." The house of this man was the resort of many of his neighbours, especially on the sabbath; and not a few young men who listened to his horrible teachings, became as thorough going infidels as himself. You can hardly estimate the danger of living within the range of such an influence as this; and yet something at least analogous to this is almost sure to be found, where the general standard of morality is greatly depressed.

It is, moreover, almost a thing of course that, in a state of society in which the evil influences to which I have already adverted, exist, there should be the additional evil of bad books—books of infidel or immoral tendency. For as this constitutes one of the most efficient instrumentalities for corrupting especially the youthful mind, it were not to be expected that those who are practised in this species of mischief, and who glory in multiplying their followers and their victims, should overlook so important an auxiliary.

Hence we find that these men are usually on the alert for putting this class of books in circulation—books adapted to every variety of intelligence and taste, from the sophistry of Hume down to the ribaldry of Paine. Most distinctly do I recollect how the individual to whom I have just referred, as bearing such sway in an infidel neighbourhood, used to avail himself of every book of evil tendency within his reach, in carrying forward his work of corruption; and he would even put them stealthily into the hands of young men, and request that they might be read without meeting the eye of their parents. And who can estimate the amount of evil which a bad book is adapted to produce? Let it be read and relished, and it will be almost sure to be read more than once—read till it has impressed itself most fully on the mind, and its poison has diffused itself through the whole moral system. And let me say, those are the *most* dangerous books in which false and demoralizing opinions are blended with high literary attractions, so that the former are, in a great measure, concealed by the latter. Many a young man, in reading the licentious productions of Byron, has supposed himself influenced chiefly

by admiration of his exalted genius; but the event has proved that the book has permanently corrupted his moral sentiments, and perhaps has effected his complete ruin for both worlds.

Perhaps there is no class in whom the social principle operates more strongly than in young men. Mark it in whatever community you will—though the aged and the middle aged may be reconciled to a state of comparative seclusion, and may sometimes even seek it as a matter of preference, the young are rarely satisfied unless they are mingling in some kind of society. Suppose then that the society into which a young man is thrown is extensively corrupt, while yet he is himself free from vicious habits, and under the general influence of a good education—the social principle will naturally lead him to look for companions; and where there are few, if any, who have not been corrupted, how much danger is there that he will form intimacies which will work for him the most lasting evil. He may, at first, be shocked by their loose principles and vicious habits; and he may resolve, from time to time, that he will never go beyond a certain point in conforming to their wishes; but, at no distant period, he finds himself

completely within their power, and perhaps with scarcely an effort at resistance, surrenders himself to a course which must soon terminate in ruin.

Need I say, my young friends, that if Providence places you in circumstances such as I have here described—no matter whether at home or abroad—you will have reason for the exercise of unremitted vigilance. Without taking heed to your way, continually, you will inevitably soon become the prey of the destroyer. If, on the other hand, you are preserved from the temptations to which such a condition exposes, and have your lot cast chiefly among the good and virtuous, be thankful to that Providence which thus highly favours you, and make good use of the advantages which it offers for becoming fitted for any station which you may hereafter be called to occupy.

LETTER V.

DANGER FROM BEING SUDDENLY CAST INTO ADVERSITY.

It does not appear that Joseph, previous to the sad visit that he made to his brethren at Dothan, had had any remarkable experience of the vicissitudes of human life. He had indeed lost an excellent mother—and that is always a severe affliction; but he was too young at the time to form any adequate conception of the loss; and no doubt his wants had all been promptly met by the ever vigilant care and affection of his father. But, from the hour that he parted with his father, or rather from the hour that he met his brethren, his condition underwent a strange and sad reverse; misfortune followed in the track of misfortune, till it seemed as if malignity and cruelty had exhausted themselves in the effort to render him unhappy. How different was the meeting which he had with his brethren from that which he had

anticipated! Instead of being received by them with open arms, as he had a right to expect, the first view which they caught of him in the distance was a signal for concerting a plan to take his life. What must have been his emotions when he found that the spirit of murder had got possession of their hearts, and that the majority of them were actually in favour of shedding his blood! What a moment must that have been when he was cast into the pit, and afterwards when he was sold as a slave, and was carried away he knew not whither, with no other prospect than that of perpetual bondage! As he reverted to the quiet and peaceful scenes in which he had so lately mingled with his much loved father, and then reflected on the treachery and cruelty which had been exercised towards him by his brethren; as he thought of the suspense and anguish to which his father must be subjected in consequence of his not returning to him, and of the deprivations and sufferings which, in all probability, awaited himself as a slave, we cannot doubt that his heart must have been pierced by the keenest agony. And subsequently to this period, you remember that he suffered again in consequence of

the false and cruel representations of an abandoned woman, and actually lay in prison until God, by a special providence, interposed for his rescue. Considering the severity of the afflictions to which Joseph was subjected, and the suddenness of his transition from prosperity to adversity, you cannot fail to perceive that he was placed in circumstances of great jeopardy; and it must have been no ordinary strength of virtue that could have enabled him to maintain his integrity and innocence.

There are many young men, whose condition, in its general features, is represented by this story of the afflictions of Joseph; for though their trials are not of the same kind with his, yet they are often both severe and unexpected. For instance, a young man, at an early period of his education, loses his parents, and henceforward is without any near friend to whom he can look either for support or counsel. Another, who had supposed himself an heir to a large estate, suddenly finds out that he is pennyless. Another has commenced business with flattering prospects, and has no doubt of being able to earn for himself a handsome living, when some accidental oversight, or some unexpected change in the times, sweeps

away whatever he has accumulated, and leaves him, with a burden of debt resting upon him, to begin the world anew. And yet another is disappointed in respect to a matrimonial connection: some attractive female has gained his heart, and has perhaps rashly, perhaps deceitfully, promised him her hand; and it may be, after his plans for life have been modified with reference to this engagement, and every thing has been made ready for the joyful consummation, she finds out, in a moment of caprice, that he is not the man that she loves best; and away she flies to try the strength of her fascinations upon another. You need not smile at my putting this down in the list of a young man's afflictions; for, though it is a matter about which some will laugh, and almost all will be sparing of their pity, I have no doubt you will think, if you ever happen to have the experience, that it deserves not only a place on the list, but a place much nearer the head of it, than you had ever imagined.

The nature of the danger to which you are exposed, must of course depend on the kind of affliction which you are called to suffer. But a sad

reverse of any kind, especially if it occur suddenly, cannot fail greatly to jeopardize your character.

There is danger, if you are the subject of any great and unlooked for affliction, that, instead of rousing the energies of your nature, and invoking the proffered aids of divine grace to sustain you under it, you will yield to discouragement and despondency, and thus cheat yourself out of much enjoyment, and the world out of much useful service. If your earnings, however small, are all suddenly swept from you, you are in danger of saying to yourself that you have no encouragement to labour, and that you will attempt it no more, as whatever you may accumulate will be sure, in some way or other, to escape from you. If, instead of inheriting a large estate, as you had expected, you find yourself left in absolute indigence—here again, how liable will you be to sink into an irresolute habit of feeling, and to make up your mind that you cannot labour for a living, even though your living should come from the charity of the world. I have in my eye at this moment a young man who has been suddenly plunged into deep adversity, not by his own fault, but through the righteous providence of God;

and, for the present, he refuses to be comforted by any consideration drawn from earth or Heaven; and, unless the state of his mind shall soon undergo an important change, I greatly fear that he will become the subject of a permanently desponding and morbid habit, which may affect his happiness and usefulness for life.

There is danger also, that the intoxicating cup may be resorted to by young men, as the remedy for severe trouble; especially where trouble is intimately connected with mortification or remorse. If you fancied yourself rich and find that you are poor; if you had fair prospects of succeeding in your business, and had expressed a confident persuasion of your success, and are disappointed, after all; if you had made your arrangements for becoming the head of a family, and those arrangements are suddenly defeated by duplicity or caprice;—notwithstanding there may be nothing in either case that ought to wound your conscience or your character, yet it is more than probable you will be stung with a sense of mortification. And how shall the effect of the disappointment be neutralized, and your accustomed spirit and resolution restored

to you? Many a young man, in these circumstances, has practically answered this question, by resorting to the inebriating cup; and what, at first, was taken as an opiate for an uneasy and distressed mind, comes, at no distant period, to be used to satisfy a diseased and deadly appetite. Better a thousand times that trouble should crush you into the dust—even into your grave, than that it should originate a habit, which, unless it be eradicated, must inevitably destroy you, not only for the life that now is, but for that which is to come.

There is danger, especially where the affliction consists in some sudden reverse in pecuniary matters—in being plunged in a moment from a state of supposed prosperity into indigence—there is danger that fraudulent and even desperate means will be resorted to, either to avert the evil as it appears in prospect, or to repair the loss when it has been actually incurred. A young man, when he sees a cloud gathering that threatens his best earthly prospects, has the strongest inducements to do his utmost to escape the impending storm; or, when he finds himself actually suffering the worst evils that he had

feared, how natural that he should nerve himself for some great effort to regain his lost possessions; and, in either case, how strong will be the temptation, especially to an ambitious spirit, even to compromise the great principles of rectitude, and make shipwreck of a good conscience, if the desired end may thereby be gained. It is quite possible that a young man may have always maintained an uncorrupted integrity, and never dreamed that he was capable of forfeiting it under any circumstances, up to the time that such a temptation as I have described presented itself; and then he may have learned, for the first time, that he was capable of being a knave. His principles of honesty were strong enough for ordinary circumstances; but when the question that presented itself to him involved the alternative whether he should submit to poverty or yield up his integrity,—he may have perhaps hesitated —he may have done it anxiously and tremblingly, but he did it—he renounced the character of an honest man.

I will only add that young men, in common with persons of every age, are in danger of perverting their afflictions to cherish a complaining

spirit against the providence of God. If God sends you afflictions—no matter what kind they may be—he has some benevolent purpose in sending them;—he designs, by means of them, to prepare you for greater usefulness, and ultimately for greater enjoyment. "It is good for a man," says Solomon, "that he bear the yoke in his youth;" and wherever afflictions, in the morning of life, are rightly improved, they always impart a mellowness, a dignity, an elevation to the character, which you look for in vain, where no other influence has been exerted than that of prosperity. But an impatient and complaining spirit will not only effectually prevent you from realizing these beneficial results, but will render your character increasingly unlovely in the eyes of both God and man. It will moreover constitute the worst possible preparation for other scenes of trial which may await you in subsequent life, and if it grows into a habit, will oppose a formidable obstacle to all those means and influences which are designed to prepare you for a better world.

That you may escape the evils which I have mentioned, and all other evils to which sudden affliction may expose you, let me urge you to

recognize a divine providence in every trouble that comes upon you, and endeavour to coöperate with God for the accomplishment of its legitimate purpose in purifying and elevating your character. Never seek to avoid an affliction by any means which a properly enlightened conscience will not justify; and never be satisfied, if, in the review of an affliction, you do not find yourself better fitted for future duties and trials, than you were before you endured it.

LETTER VI.

DANGER FROM BEING ENTRUSTED WITH THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.

I HAVE directed your attention, in preceding letters, to the condition of Joseph deprived of his liberty, and subjected to foreign caprice and dictation. But I come now to present him before you in a different attitude. Notwithstanding he has been sold as a slave, he is not destined long

to be treated as a slave. His winning manners, his obliging disposition, his exemplary fidelity, and his uncommon tact, all combine to recommend him to some station above that of a common servant. He was soon appointed by his master the overseer of his house; and as his master was a man in authority—the captain of the king's guard, this must have been a place of no inconsiderable responsibility. It is true that he lost this place shortly after, by the cruel misrepresentations of Potiphar's wife; but as he was accused falsely, he quickly came out from under the cloud, and was advanced to a place of much more importance than that from which he had been ejected. In consequence of his wise interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, which was of vital importance to the prosperity of the country, Pharaoh was pleased to constitute him the chief officer in the land; and, accordingly, after having invested him with the appropriate badges of authority, he issued his mandate to all his people, to treat him with the reverence to which his character and office entitled him. Joseph had indeed, by this time, advanced to what we should now consider middle age; but, considering the

greater length of human life at that period, he could be regarded, even at the time when he reached his greatest elevation, as only approaching his meridian. It will occur to you, at once, that it was a perilous situation in which he was now placed; and that, before the experiment had resulted, there was much reason to fear that the quick transition from being a slave to an overseer, and then from being imprisoned as a malefactor to being made governour of the whole land, would turn out to be not only disastrous to himself, but adverse to the interests of those under whom he acted, as well as of those who were subjected to his control.

But Joseph is not the only young man, who is placed in circumstances of jeopardy, from being charged with the interests of others. The most important places, especially of publick responsibility, are not usually occupied by young men; and yet the greater portion of young men have some other concerns than their own to manage; and sometimes they are charged with matters that have a most important bearing on the prosperity of individuals, and even of the publick. A young man is commissioned to go abroad to transact

business of great moment for a mercantile house; and he may have it in his power greatly to promote its prosperity, or to bring upon it extreme embarrassment, or even absolute ruin. Another is employed as a clerk—perhaps a head clerk, in some great mercantile or manufacturing establishment: his employers confide to him all their great pecuniary interests—he has a hand even upon the very sources of their prosperity. Another occupies the responsible place of a teacher of youth, and thereby has committed to him, in a great degree, the formation of the character of his pupils, and the consequent happiness of their parents, and the well being of society. And yet another gains some responsible appointment under the government of the state or the nation, and possibly, in spite of his youth, may sometimes have the ear of those whose influence is directly felt to the extremities of the land. In these and various other situations in which young men are placed, though there are great opportunities for usefulness, there are also some great temptations to evil. There is danger not only that the interests committed to them will suffer, but also that they will do irreparable injury to themselves. Let me

direct your attention to two or three of the prominent sources of danger.

There is danger from neglect. There is no post of duty which can be successfully occupied by an individual who takes little or no interest in it. Its duties may indeed be very light, and it may require but a small portion of one's time to discharge them; but, after all, if there is no interest felt in them, light as they are, they will be almost sure either to be entirely neglected or very imperfectly performed. If you go abroad on a mercantile agency, professedly to look after the interests of your employer, and yet do not, in some measure, make his interests your own, it is quite as likely that your agency will embarrass, as that it will benefit him. Or, if you are a clerk, and look upon every service that devolves upon you, as a burden to be submitted to, rather than as a duty to be cheerfully performed, you will probably entirely omit many things which you ought to do, and only imperfectly do those which you attempt: thus the accounts of the establishment may be irregularly kept, opportunities for advantageous sales may be needlessly lost, and both the reputation and prosperity of the house

may rapidly decline. Or, if you are a teacher, and think of nothing but your salary or your ease, your pupils, instead of reaping the legitimate benefits of sound and wholesome instruction, will almost of course contract bad habits both intellectual and moral; and not improbably their parents may discover, when it is too late to remedy the evil, that their children have been only acquiring an education for an unprofitable and wretched life. Mere neglect in a teacher of youth, without any positive intention to do wrong, may occasion evils which no subsequent training either of parents or teachers, will be able to cure. And so also in places of civil trust—places, it may be, not greatly elevated, but yet connected either with the state or national government—an indifferent habit of mind—a mere want of interest in the appropriate duties of the station, may bring after it consequences of the most serious and ruinous import.

It were well if there were no danger in the case I am supposing, except from neglect; but sad experience shows that here also are temptations to dishonesty, which, alas! with melancholy frequency, prove too powerful to be resisted. I

might specify cases almost without number in which young men have been sent out by their employers to gather in debts, and some in which they have been employed as agents for benevolent institutions, in which they have proved recreant to all the claims of honesty, and have run off, appropriating to themselves the whole amount of their collections. But I would direct your attention here more particularly to the case of a merchant's clerk — of a young man who goes into a counting-house with a view to acquire a commercial education. It is quite possible that he may have had the obligations of truth and integrity inculcated upon him from his earliest years, and his conduct may never have betrayed, even to the most scrutinizing observer, the least delinquency on this subject. But the secret of this may be, that he has never yet been subjected to any great temptation. Perhaps he is placed in circumstances in which vice solicits with greater power than at any previous period of his life; and first he is brought into the attitude of dallying with the tempter, and finally he determines to yield. But the class of vicious indulgences to which he is tempted are expensive — at the close

of a midnight revel there is a bill to be paid; and yet his parents have provided him with money only to meet his necessary expenses. He casts about him for some additional means; and it occurs to him that there is plenty of money in the drawer of his employer; and that he may venture secretly to borrow a little to be replaced the moment that his funds are a little replenished. He borrows again and again, making himself easy in the reflection that he fully intends to pay, though he becomes less and less scrupulous in regard to the time of payment. Meanwhile he keeps no account of what he takes, and is more than willing to be ignorant of the extent of his obligation. But, at no very distant day, he gives up the idea of replacing what he withdraws, and agitates in his mind another question—to what extent he can proceed without too much danger of detection? As he makes progress in vice, especially if he be addicted to gaming, his wants proportionally increase; and in the same proportion, he becomes adventurous in his frauds. By some unexpected means, he is at length found out: if he gets timely warning, perhaps he escapes the hand of justice; or, perhaps before he

has suspected the danger of apprehension, the magistrate has shown him his warrant for removing him from the counting-house to the prison. And this may be the beginning of an exile for many years from all society except that of felons —from all privileges except those which can be enjoyed in a dungeon. It is unnecessary that I should point to particular cases to illustrate what I have here said; for I am sure your own recollection will supply you with some in which you will recognize the most painful features to which I have adverted.

There is danger, moreover, in certain cases, that there will be an abuse of authority to purposes of excessive lenity on the one hand, or of downright tyranny on the other. You are entrusted with the management of some large establishment, and it devolves on you to see that all who are below you are actively and industriously occupied, while yet they are not tasked beyond reasonable bounds. Now you may do great injustice to those who employ you, by conniving at the indolence or carelessness of those whom you are required to look after; or you may be no less unjust to *them* on the other hand by

exacting of them a greater amount of labour than they can reasonably be required to perform. Or you are engaged in the business of teaching youth —you virtually yield up your authority by leaving them to take their own way; or else you task them so severely, or meet them with so little encouragement, that they grow weary and disheartened, and avail themselves of the first opportunity to escape from your control. I have known children of at least an ordinary degree of promise, who, by reason of the injudicious treatment they have received from their teachers, have had the development of their faculties most unreasonably checked, and have borne witness to the evil which they have suffered, to the close of life.

You cannot, my young friends, estimate the importance of the subject of this letter so highly as it deserves. I pray you to hold it to your minds, till you are brought fully to realize your danger, and you feel that you have the strength requisite to meet it successfully. Whether the interests with which you are charged are greater or less, guard them just as sacredly, aim to promote them just as carefully, as if they were

exclusively your own. Nay, hesitate not to submit to great inconvenience, rather than even appear to be unfaithful in respect to any trust that has been committed to you. Be as cautious as you will, how you assume responsibilities; but when assumed, sooner part with your right arm, than trifle with them. Act up fully to all your promises—to all that can reasonably be expected of you. And remember that the least tendency that you discover in yourself to depart from this rule points with ominous foreboding—perhaps to the life of a vagabond—perhaps to the dungeon of a felon.

LETTER VII.

DANGER FROM COMING INTO POSSESSION OF GREAT WEALTH.

It does not follow, as a matter of course, in these days, that because a man occupies a station of great influence in society, he should have great

worldly possessions; for nothing is more common than for an individual to hold one of the highest posts of civil authority, to have the control, to a great extent, of the public treasury, and to have a hand, more or less directly, on the springs of national prosperity, and yet to have little or no property that is, strictly speaking, his own. But this does not seem to have been the case with Joseph. The constitution of society, at the period in which he lived, identified his exaltation to the office of governour with the greatest affluence; and the manner in which he provided for his father's family, shows that the most ample resources were at his command. And the elevation from poverty to wealth was as sudden as can well be imagined; for the governour was made out of the prisoner, just as quickly as the prison dress could be taken off and the robes of office put on. But a few years before, Joseph was a poor boy, with only the comforts and the prospects of a slave; and though his prospects had at one time been brighter, yet they had become overcast again, and he was actually imprisoned, on a false accusation, as a felon; but, in a moment, like the sun suddenly emerging from a dark cloud, he is

placed in a situation in which the last vestige of poverty retires from him, and the treasures of Egypt are all put at his disposal. It was a situation fraught with imminent danger—danger not only from the authority that was committed to him, but from the wealth which was its necessary accompaniment.

There are various ways in which it happens to many young men of the present day to be suddenly elevated to great affluence. This occurs frequently through the ordinary channel of inheritance: the individual finds himself rich, because his parents were rich before him, and as they have been removed by death, the estate, as a matter of course, falls into his hands. In this case, there is no sudden change experienced; for the young man had always been surrounded with elegances and luxuries, and had always known that he was the lawful heir to the estate, whenever the decease of his parents should occur. But it sometimes happens that a large fortune is bequeathed to a youth, who had always been poor, by some individual from whom he had no right to expect any legacy at all: possibly while he is hard at work at some mechanical trade, which

furnishes him only the means of a scanty subsistence, his eye rests on a paragraph in the newspaper, announcing that some one—perhaps on the other side of the ocean—has mentioned his name in his will, in a way that elevates him at once to a place among the richest men in the community. And there are other cases still in which young men suddenly emerge from poverty to wealth, by means of some fortunate speculation —possibly by the drawing of a prize in a lottery, or by a great and unlooked for rise in the value of the little property which they have acquired, or by some other circumstance which they had never contemplated as possible, until it actually occurred. Let the property have been acquired in whatever manner it may, I will endeavour to show you that the mere possession of it, however it should be regarded as a blessing to be borne in grateful remembrance, may nevertheless prove a snare from which, if you once fall into it, you may not easily extricate yourself.

What then are some of the dangers to which young men are peculiarly exposed from coming into the possession of extensive riches?

There is danger that they will form a habit of

indolence—indolence as it respects both the body and the mind. I have adverted to this subject already in what I have said respecting excessive parental indulgence; but it is too important to be entirely passed over in the present connexion. Nothing is more certain than that the mind is constituted with such tendencies, as to require some powerful influence from without to keep it active; and there is no influence more effective than that which results from necessity; and no necessity more imperious than that which is identified with the means of our present subsistence. If a young man has never formed the habit of applying his faculties in any useful way, the fact of his being able to live without exertion, will in all probability prevent his ever forming such a habit; or if he actually does form it, it will be a wonderful triumph of the better principles of his nature. If, on the contrary, he has already become an active young man, under the influence of the conviction that he must labour for his sustenance—though it may be more easy to continue the habit of activity than it would be to form it anew,—yet there is great danger that the shock occasioned by the discovery that he

is independent, may cause a general listlessness to come over him, fatal alike to his reputation and usefulness. These are evils, you will observe, not essentially incident to the case of which I am treating;—for if they were so, your duty, not less than your interest, would require that you should never, in any circumstances, consent to possess a large estate; whereas a large estate rightly used is certainly a great blessing;—but, after all, they are evils which so frequently occur, that you cannot guard against them with too scrupulous vigilance. Remember that man answers the end of his existence, just in proportion as his faculties are brought into action in the right way; and whatever is suffered to operate as a clog to their exercise, is an occasion of evil which you cannot now adequately estimate.

The spirit to which I have here referred, once fully imbibed, is a fruitful soil of evil affections and evil habits; for it is a rare thing that you see indolence, whether associated with wealth or poverty, without seeing other vices of a more positive character clustering around it. Intemperance and sensuality particularly are very likely

to be its concomitants; and along with these often come scenes of turmoil and violence, the report of which brings out the energies of the law. Young men, who have great estates, often feel as if the law is not made for such as themselves, and imagine that their wealth will secure to them an exemption from its penalty; but they soon find out to their cost that the law asks no other question concerning them, than whether they are offenders; and that "the rich and the poor meet together" before the tribunal of their country, as well as in the grave. There is a tradition, which I believe is quite authentic, that the late king of England, when he was in this country, soon after he emerged from boyhood, fell into a spree in the city of New-York, with some of his companions, and was arrested by the civil authority and shut up in a guard-house. He was a king's son, and destined to be a king himself, and his inheritance, so far as property was concerned, was to be that of a royal prince;—and doubtless this very circumstance might have emboldened him to the riotous act for which he was arrested; but it turned out that he was a subject of law in common with the most vulgar offender.

Where these *greater* excesses are not realized as the consequence of a young man's being elevated to great wealth, there are often other evils which, if less flagrant in their bearing on the general interests of society, have scarcely a less injurious effect on the individuals themselves —I refer especially to the spirit of ostentation and luxury—to every thing that is included in the pride of life. How common is it for young men, to whom Providence has given great wealth, to practise the greatest extravagance in respect to their establishments—their dwelling, their furniture, their equipage, their general mode of living; imagining that this is not only the way to enjoy life best, but to secure for themselves the most enviable reputation! But the common sense of the world, and even their own common sense, if they would bring it into exercise, is against them. In the first place, there is nothing in all this that meets their nobler desires;—and more than that—familiarity leads to satiety, and satiety produces disgust. A small proportion of the expense which they actually incur, would procure for them all the real comforts which they enjoy; and the balance is much worse than

thrown away; — for it only mingles neutralizing, if not absolutely bitter, ingredients in their cup. And then what is the effect upon others? A few may indeed be weak enough to envy such a person, and his condition may be conformed to their very ideal of human happiness; but those whose opinion is of any value, will pity him as a poor, weak, vain young man. Even if he actually possesses some estimable qualities, they will be thrown not a little into the shade, by being associated with this miserable passion for worldly splendour.

But it is possible that a young man may possess great wealth, and may not be liable to the imputation even of extravagance — he may do nothing more than live in a style which his property justifies, and his standing in society requires; and yet, after all, he may be deeply injured by his wealth — he may be, in the worst sense, a victim to it. For he may be proud of his great possessions, even when his pride does not take the form of ostentation — especially he may be proud of his reputation in the community as a rich man — proud of the respect and influence which his riches procure for him in the circle in which he

moves. He may accumulate upon himself the guilt of turning away from the supplications of the needy, or of refusing to aid in the extension of the gospel, when the most abundant means for meeting these demands are within his reach. He may lose sight of his dependance on God, and refuse to acknowledge his providence in his munificent gifts, and settle down, to all intents and purposes, into a practical atheist. Indeed his heart may become as hard as the nether mill stone, and the prospect of an aggravated condemnation may open before him, by reason of the abuse of his wealth; while many a young man who has not been set in such a slippery place, is cultivating, under a different influence, benevolent and generous dispositions, and is sustained by the prospect of a glorious reward.

As an antidote to the dangers which I have brought to your consideration in this letter, let me entreat you to guard against the illusive glare of wealth. Remember that all the wealth of the world could never render you happy;—for this obvious reason—that your Creator designed that you should find your highest happiness in nobler objects. Remember that you hold your wealth

as stewards; and that, however you may forget your character in this respect, another day will convince you of its reality. Remember, in short, that wealth is a blessing or a curse, as it is used for good or perverted to evil. Ponder that momentous problem which fell from the lips of the all wise and all gracious Saviour—"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I here conclude what I had designed to say in respect to the dangers to which young men are exposed, as suggested by the history of Joseph; and, in my next letter, shall proceed to another branch of my general subject—viz. the various praiseworthy qualities which were developed in Joseph's character, and which are worthy not only to be venerated but imitated, by every young man.

PART II.

CHARACTER TO WHICH YOUNG MEN SHOULD ASPIRE.

LETTER VIII.

INTEGRITY.

I HAVE presented Joseph before you in various circumstances of temptation, and have shown you that, in each of the different situations in which he was placed, his experience was not unlike that which falls to the lot of many young men at the present day. Having considered the dangers to which he was exposed, I wish now to direct your attention to the spirit in which he encountered them: in other words, to bring before you the leading features of his character, as they are developed in his history.

And here, before I proceed to notice the particular qualities of which the character of Joseph was made up, it is proper that I should premise that his noble and virtuous dispositions all had their origin in true religion. We have indeed no account of the time or the manner in which he became religious; but it is reasonable to infer from the inspired narrative, either that he was sanctified from his birth, or that divine grace wrought effectually on his heart in early childhood, through the influence of parental fidelity. For, to say nothing of the fact that he was divinely honoured by prophetic dreams while he was a mere child, every thing that is recorded of his earlier years, evinces the clean heart and the right spirit; and the same principle which marked his first developments of character, waxed stronger and stronger, till his character was matured by manhood, and finally sealed by death.

It may possibly occur to you to inquire how far the religion of Joseph was the same with that which it is the design of these letters to urge upon *you*—in other words, how far the patriarchal religion was identical with Christianity. I reply, they are the same in substance—the only differ-

ence is, that the one is a less complete, the other a more complete development. The religion of the patriarchs differs essentially from the religion of nature in this—that, while the latter recognizes man in an unfallen state, and therefore not requiring the interposition of a Mediator, the former regards him as a sinner, and includes the great principle of salvation by grace. This principle is indeed only dimly shadowed forth, when compared with the clearness of subsequent dispensations; but still it is there; and it is justly as truly the distinguishing principle of the patriarchal as of the Christian system. And there is the same substantial identity in respect to the duties which the two systems inculcate. They both differ from natural religion in that they require duties corresponding to the new relations into which men are brought by the mediatorial economy; but they harmonize with natural religion in requiring a perfect character; and they differ from each other only in the different degrees of responsibility, consequent on the different degrees of light, which they respectively involve. The religion which made Joseph what he was, is, to all practical purposes, the same which must constitute the basis of every truly

virtuous character now; though you must not fail to bear in mind that a brighter light than Joseph ever beheld, shines around *you;* and that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him will be much required."

Having said thus much in regard to the ruling principle of Joseph's life—the stock on which his good qualities were all engrafted, I beg now to call your attention to those qualities somewhat in detail; and the first on which I purpose to dwell is that which is indicated by the title of this letter—INTEGRITY.

Joseph's sterling integrity came out in all the conduct of his life. It was manifest in the manner in which he discharged all his personal and official duties; but was never more strikingly displayed on any occasion, than that on which he resisted the wiles of a base woman, at the expense of being shut up in a dungeon. But that you may form a suitable estimate of the importance of this virtue, allow me to dwell a little upon its nature, and the elements of which it is composed.

INTEGRITY literally signifies *soundness*—as used figuratively, it denotes *moral rectitude.* And yet this definition, in its application to man in his

present state, requires to be guarded and limited; for there is no man whose actions, intentions, feelings, are all conformed to the perfect standard of God's law, as were those of our first parents before the fall. In the present state of human nature, every man who has not been the subject of a spiritual renovation, is under the controlling influence of a corrupt heart; and even those on whom the renovating process has passed, are still, to an extent, heirs of corruption and children of disobedience. Even such a man as David had constant occasion to mourn over his iniquities; and Paul, eminent as he was for his devotedness to Christ, complained of a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death. Neither David nor Paul then was upright in the same sense that Adam was, or that glorified saints in Heaven now are. It is only in a modified sense that this word can be considered as describing the characters of even the best men on earth. What then are the elements of Christian integrity?

It has its beginning in a correct moral discernment—in that state of the mind that renders it

susceptible of clear perceptions of right and wrong. No doubt it is much easier, in most cases, to know the right than to do it; and yet, such is the influence of depravity upon our whole moral constitution, that we are exceedingly prone to err even in our moral judgments. There is the influence of selfishness, of prejudice, of passion, of example, which operates to bring a film over the eye of the mind, or at least so to impair the moral vision that its views become distorted and false. Hence we read of those who call evil good, and good evil; who put sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet. And hence we find the great apostle declaring in reference to himself previous to his conversion,—"I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." And the same thing, substantially, we see passing in the world every day. There are some men who, by a long course of flagrant vice, seem to have lost all moral discernment, their consciences being absolutely seared; while there are many others of whose general character we may judge favourably, who yet, through some unhallowed influence, become strangely blinded to the right in respect to some

particular subject, and perhaps are carried far away from the path of duty, while they are not conscious of having forsaken it at all. But inasmuch as man is a moral agent, he is responsible for this state of mind by which he is misled: he is bound to resist all those influences by which his discernment of truth and duty is liable to be impaired. And it is only in proportion as a man does resist these influences that he can be said to be upright. It can never be an apology for one's doing wrong, that he *thinks* he is doing right, so long as God has constituted him with the power of judging correctly, and he has voluntarily sacrificed this high prerogative of his nature to the indulgence of depravity. I repeat then, integrity has its beginning in a correct moral discernment.

This however is *only* its beginning; for it implies also a disposition to act in accordance with right views, or to carry out correct moral judgments into the life. It is no uncommon thing for persons to fly in the face of their own honest convictions: with a full knowledge of what is right, urged on by the influence of some evil propensity, they plunge deeply, irrecoverably,

into the wrong. And then again, there are many more who are convinced where the path of duty lies, and who externally walk in that path; and yet, after all, it is a constrained obedience which they render—the heart is not in it—it is merely a tribute to conscience, or perhaps to publick opinion; and it is only for the want of courage that they are not seen walking in the way of the ungodly, and sitting in the scoffer's seat. The latter of these classes may indeed have more of the appearance of integrity than the former; but they have not a particle more of the genuine quality. The truly upright man, while he sincerely desires to know what his duty is, as sincerely desires to do it. And in the performance of the external act, he is governed not merely by a regard to his own conscience, but by a respect to God's authority—by a cordial approbation and love of moral rectitude. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is a prayer that is often breathed forth from his heart and his lips; and he walks habitually in the light that shines upon his path, in answer to this prayer.

You will perceive, from these remarks, that the scripture meaning of the word *integrity* is far more

comprehensive than the meaning which common use gives to it. We are accustomed to speak of a man as possessing integrity of character, if he is honest in his dealings with his fellow men; if he is above all unfair and disingenuous dealing, and moves forward continually in a plain and open path. And this certainly *is* an admirable trait; and though it does not necessarily involve a principle of true religion in the heart, it marks one of the noblest forms of human character that can exist without that principle. But integrity, in the large and scriptural sense, is quite a different thing: it implies a sincere desire and constant aim to do our *whole* duty;—our duty to God as well as to man;—our duty in every relation we sustain—in every condition in which we are placed.

Let me urge you then, my young friends, while you cultivate this general integrity of character founded in Christian principle, to see to it that it gives a complexion to all the particular actions of your life. I refer here more especially to the discharge of your social duties—to the relations into which you are brought with your fellow men in your ordinary pursuits; and I beg you to

remember that no integrity is genuine that is not universal and particular, and especially that does not discover itself in the details of worldly business.

You are destined to be a mechanic—to gain your living by selling the product of your own labour. And this is an honourable vocation, provided only it be pursued with integrity. But see to it that integrity regulates the price of every article that you make. Never even seem to take advantage of the necessities of your customers—to extort from them an unreasonable price for an article, because you know they must have it, and that you alone can supply them. And if you engage to do a piece of work, be sure that the quality of it comes up, in every respect, to the spirit of your engagement—that there be no just ground for complaint, either in respect to the material of which it is made, or the labour that is bestowed upon it. And when you promise, see that your promise is fulfilled to the very letter. If you promise with a view to accommodate your customers, and then fail to fulfil for the sake of accommodating yourself, you will be obliged at least to practise some self-deception, in order to

take the comfort of thinking that you are a person of integrity.

Or you are training up to be a tradesman—to spend your days in buying and selling goods. And here again, you are in good business enough, if you hold fast a good conscience. Suppose you have made a bad bargain for yourself, and have been deceived in some extensive purchase, and have paid double the sum which the goods were really worth—what course does integrity require—what course does it permit you to take? Are you at liberty to endeavour to get back your money at all events,—even though you have to practise the same deception upon others that has actually been practised upon you? By no means—not even if the alternative is, that you must be reduced to absolute poverty. But suppose your neighbours around you are given to the practice of misrepresenting their goods, and over-reaching their customers, as often as they have opportunity; and it seems to you that your only chance of making your way among them, is, occasionally at least, to stoop to the same thing—rather than do it, even in a single instance, shut up your store, and if need be, turn hewer of wood

or drawer of water. If you are inquired of in respect to the state of the market, let your reply be an honest one, however it may affect your own interest. Think not to retain a customer at the expense even of the semblance of misrepresentation. Choose rather that a man should leave your store with the impression that you are a strictly honest merchant, though he may not have traded with you the value of a penny, than that he should leave behind him his thousands and go aw y doubting your integrity.

Or you are looking forward to the profession of medicine—it may not have occurred to you that here is any field for the practice of dishonesty; and yet, in truth, there is scarcely any vocation in life that opens a wider one. You may set at defiance the dictates of integrity in the charges which you make for your services; and you may encourage yourself in exorbitant demands by the reflection that a physician's bill is one of the last that most people like to dispute. In opposition to this, you are to regulate your charges by a strict sense of justice, to say nothing of charity in extraordinary cases—you are not to estimate

your services more highly than well judging and impartial persons around you would estimate them. But, if you may not be dishonest in your charges, neither may you be dishonest in your practice. I do not mean that a physician is bound always instantly to reveal every apprehension he may have in respect to the character or the issue of a disease, either to the patient or the patient's friends—this no doubt would, in many cases at least, be an injudicious—possibly a fatal course. But I do protest, in the name of all integrity, against that faithless dealing on the part of physicians, which aims to conceal danger to the last,—which actually equivocates and even lies to accomplish it,—which leaves the poor patient to find out his real situation first, when he is in the act of dying,—and which overwhelms his friends with an agony rendered doubly bitter by the fact that they have had no opportunity to prepare for it. I counsel you to be prudent in these delicate and difficult circumstances; but never utter a word that shall violate your sober convictions. I could give you many reasons for this; but it is enough to say that there are no

possible circumstances that can absolve you from the obligation of keeping a good conscience.

Perhaps you have in view the legal profession — a glorious profession it is; and yet how miserably prostituted by the petty arts of quibbling and misrepresentation. But even here, it is quite possible to be an honest man — yea, an eminent example of integrity; and such *you* must be, if you will be, in the best sense, an ornament to the profession. Never voluntarily enlist in a cause which you are satisfied is wrong and ought not to prevail; unless indeed you may be legally and officially designated for the defence of some unhappy creature, who has forfeited perhaps even his life into the hands of publick justice, but who nevertheless is entitled to a trial by the laws of his country. Never encourage men to go to law, merely from the expectation that you shall be able to make money out of the case; and fail not to do what you can to terminate a litigation at the earliest moment possible. In your management of every cause, show yourself frank and manly, and never take undue advantage of your adversary. I remember to have heard of a Rhode Island lawyer, who had advanced some false principles as points

of law; and when his antagonist, on retiring from the court room, expressed his surprise that he should have made such declarations, knowing them, as he did, to be false—he facetiously replied, "Oh I said it as a lawyer and not as a man." "But," rejoined his antagonist, "when the devil comes after the lawyer, what will become of the man?"

Some of you—and this is the last supposition I will make—may become professional politicians; or even, if this should not be the case, you may have—doubtless will have—more or less to do with political life. I am aware that it has come to pass, at this day, that to speak of an honest politician is regarded as well nigh a solecism. But this should not be so. Washington and Jay and Rush were politicians—they had a hand directly on the great political interests of the country, during some of the most critical periods of its history. And yet the country has never seen men of more stern and incorruptible integrity than they. Let such men as these be your models; and when you reach the point where you can no longer remain in political life, and exemplify the character which adorned them in

respect to integrity, let that be the point that shall mark your withdrawal into some other sphere of publick or private usefulness. Rely on it, your country will never need your services as a politician a single day after you have yielded up a good conscience. Resolve then that you will never be the tool or the slave of any party —that you will never appear to endorse measures which you conscientiously disapprove—that you will stand up for the right, even in the hottest political contest, though, in doing so, you should stand absolutely alone. To deserve the name of an honest politician at this day, is to possess a degree of conscientiousness and firmness, which must render one proof against the strongest temptations, and render one safe in the lion's den or in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

LETTER IX.

DILIGENCE.

You cannot, I think, have failed to be struck with the fact that every part of Joseph's history shows him to have been a man of most active habits. The places which he successively occupied both under Potiphar and Pharaoh, were places of great responsibility; and each involved duties which never could have been performed by one, whose faculties were not trained to vigorous exercise. It was while he was diligently engaged in the duties of his vocation, that the temptation was presented to him, which, on account of the resistance which he opposed to it, cost him a temporary imprisonment; and, even while he was in prison, he had an important trust committed to him, which must have furnished him with incessant occupation.

I design to present Joseph before you in this letter, chiefly as a model of diligence; but I shall

consider the subject in its largest sense, and may connect with it some other things which, however legitimately drawn from the history, may, perhaps with equal propriety, be referred to some other general attribute of character.

The first thing that here deserves your consideration, is the selection of a suitable field on which your diligence is to be displayed; for, if you mistake here, you put at hazard both your comfort and usefulness for life. I am well aware that parents should have something to say on this subject; and if I were addressing them, I should venture to suggest to them some counsels and cautions in relation to it; but if parents are discreet, they will be guided in the part which they take by the same considerations which ought to influence *you*. I would say that, in selecting your vocation for life, (for I here take for granted that you are to have some fixed employment) you should have respect, first of all, to your own particular capabilities. I say *particular* capabilities, for though all men are constituted with the same general faculties, yet all do not possess them in equal degrees of strength; nor are the same particular faculties always predominant in different

individuals. Hence it frequently happens that, while an individual is admirably fitted for one kind of business, he has scarcely any talent for another—of course his usefulness must depend, in a great measure, on his selecting the employment to which he is adapted. You must also have respect, in no small degree, to your own taste; for it rarely happens that a young man succeeds in any occupation to which he is constitutionally averse; though you must not let this principle carry you so far, as to furnish an apology for engaging in any employment that is not useful and praiseworthy. And finally, you must have no small regard to the circumstances in which Providence places you; for that in which it might be clearly your duty to engage, in one set of circumstances, it might be your imperative duty to decline, in another. For instance, I have known young men whose predilections would have led them to missionary life, who have nevertheless been deterred from devoting themselves to it, by the consideration that they had aged parents who were entirely dependant upon them, and who would be likely to suffer if they were to leave them for a distant country. And I have con-

sidered their decision as honourable alike to their good judgment and their filial affection. It happened in respect to Joseph, that the several considerations which I have mentioned, were evidently united in determining his sphere of action. The admirable manner in which he acquitted himself in the different stations which he occupied, showed that he possessed the requisite talents for the duties that devolved upon him; and though he never betrayed the least ambition for high places, and only accepted of them when they were offered to him, or rather when he was appointed to them by superior authority, it is evident from the graceful manner in which he always filled them, that he had, to say the least, no constitutional aversion to the class of duties which they imposed upon him. And as to the indications of Providence arising from the circumstances in which he was placed—nothing could be more decisive: Potiphar made him overseer of his house, when he was a poor slave; and Pharaoh made him governour of the land, when he was shut up in prison; and surely no one could doubt, in either case, whether it were not better to accept a station of dignity and

usefulness, than to remain in a state of bondage or of imprisonment. It does not appear that he had ever any occasion even to hesitate in regard to what sphere of usefulness he should occupy; and even if such occasion had existed, he had no parents or relatives near him, to consult. But it will be well for *you*, to take the advice of those who are best qualified to give it, both in respect to your natural capabilities and the circumstances in which you are placed. And let me say that it is a matter of no small moment that your first decision on this subject be your ultimate one; for, though there are cases in which a young man who is educated for one profession succeeds well in another, yet it much more frequently happens that the habits of thought and action which have been contracted with reference to one sphere of life, are found materially to interfere with success in a different one. I would, by no means, say that such a change may not sometimes be made to advantage; but it is often the bartering away of eminence for mediocrity; and no young man, in fixing on a profession, should allow the possibility of making such a change to enter into his calculations. He may indeed remain, for some time,

undecided; and so he ought to remain till he can reach an intelligent and satisfactory conclusion; but when he has once formed his purpose, unless he may subsequently have some very special reasons for a change, let it be like the laws of the Medes and Persians.

If you have advanced far enough in life to be able to understand these letters, (and if you have not, you belong not to the class for which they are designed,) you have, or ought to have, a regular routine of daily duties;—for even though you may not have determined what is to be your occupation for life, yet you are, or should be, in the course of your education for some permanent occupation or other. Whether you are at school, or at college, or in a mercantile house, or in a lawyer's office, or have actually begun the world for yourself, you are to be occupied chiefly with the particular employment to which you profess to be devoted. You must not suffer yourself to be needlessly called off from your appropriate duties—especially you must not allow the intrusion of indolent and unprofitable acquaintances; or, if they come once, you must let them know by your manner, if not by your words, that your maxim

is "Duty before pleasure." Even if you are sometimes placed in circumstances in which the difficulty of your daily task is greatly increased, still endeavour, if possible, to perform it; for, while you can never know but that the failure, in a single instance, may be the commencement of a general habit of neglect, you may rest assured that the triumph which persevering fidelity in these circumstances ensures to you, will be worth more than you can imagine, to your stability and dignity and self respect.

Be not satisfied with going through the form of the various duties that devolve upon you; but be careful that every thing that you attempt is done in the best possible manner. Some persons who do not wholly forget their duties, and are not disposed to pass them by without some attention, perform them in such a careless and slovenly manner that they might nearly as well have neglected them altogether. Let it be a principle with you from which nothing shall lead you to depart, that you will leave nothing that you undertake till it is thoroughly accomplished. If you are a student, never lay aside your book, till you fully comprehend your lesson: whatever

mysteries there may be before you in the book that you are studying, let there be none in the portion of it that you have passed over. If you are a mechanic, or a merchant, or a lawyer, or a physician, or any thing else, rest not till you have done the very best that you are capable of doing in the station which you occupy. If you early form the habit of doing every thing well, the consequence will be that you will soon do every thing with pleasure to yourself, and with satisfaction to others.

But while the general course of your efforts is indicated by the nature of the employment to which you devote yourself,—in other words, while it is to be expected that you labour chiefly in some one particular direction, you are to beware that you do not neglect other collateral duties of equal or even greater importance. If there is danger that you may not engage with sufficient earnestness in the duties of your worldly vocation, there is danger, on the other hand, that you may be so intensely occupied by them, that they will lead you to forget that you have any thing else to do in the world than make money, or hunt after fame. You have various duties to perform towards

your fellow men from which nothing can absolve you—duties to your family, your friends, the community in which you live. You have also duties that you owe more immediately to yourself and to God—such as reading the scriptures, devout meditation, private devotion, every thing that enters into the cultivation of personal piety. You must never pursue any worldly vocation so eagerly that you shall not give yourself time to fulfil all these various classes of duties with rigid fidelity. That kind of diligence which looks with a cold eye on our obligations to God, and which exhausts itself in efforts to gain the world—no matter in what form—poisons the comfort, mars the character, ruins the soul.

You will not understand me as intimating any disapprobation of the occasional mingling of young men in the lighter scenes of life. It is quite necessary to their highest usefulness that they should sometimes relax from severer duties, and nothing is more fitting for them than the interchange of kind feelings with each other and with their friends. This, while it constitutes the appropriate culture of their social nature, and thus subserves some of the great ends of human

existence, is adapted to answer the purpose of all requisite cessation from labour, and to brighten up the faculties for the graver pursuits of life.

I ought here, however, to remark, that the purposes of relaxation may be accomplished, to a great extent, by a course of useful reading. This, of course, is not of itself sufficient, because it makes no provision for bodily exercise: still it may frequently be resorted to with good effect; and every prudent young man will take care that it constitutes a part of the economy of life. Comparatively few are professionally devoted to pursuits that are in themselves specially adapted to the culture of the mind; but with almost any worldly vocation there may be connected a habit of useful reading, that shall keep the faculties in healthful exercise, and in a constant course of improvement.

I hardly need say that it is of the greatest importance to your fulfilling with diligence your various duties, that you should use all requisite means for the preservation of your health; for you may rest assured that, if your health fails, your power of exertion fails with it; and health is not so easy a thing to be retained, that you can

hope to remain in the possession of it without great care and vigilance. With a view to this, avoid all habits of excess. Be careful particularly in respect to food, and rest, and exercise: have fixed rules, so far as you can, in regard to each, and let nothing but invincible necessity lead you to depart from them. If your occupation subjects you to a sedentary habit—for instance, if it be that of a student, there is additional reason why you should give heed to these directions; for nothing but a scrupulous observance of them will counteract the tendencies to disease incident to such a vocation. I could refer you to cases without number in which the noblest minds have been prostrated and ruined by a neglect of those wholesome rules which Providence has prescribed for the regulation of our physical nature.

It has doubtless sometimes occurred to you, as a matter of surprise, that some persons who seem to be always busy, and when applied to for any service, never have a moment of leisure to give to it, after all, accomplish very little. If you scrutinize the case, you will almost always find that the chief difficulty lies in the want of method. These persons are willing enough to labour;

but they have never trained themselves to labour systematically. They take every thing at random, and of course at disadvantage. Nothing is done in its appropriate place — nothing at the proper time; and hence that which is done, is often to very little purpose. You may be the busiest man in the community, and your efforts may generally be well directed; and yet, without system, you would hardly be missed, if you should be removed from the world. Endeavour then always to work by rule. Let your duties succeed each other so as to produce no confusion — so that you shall never find yourself lost in the midst of them. Let your diligence be systematic as well as earnest and persevering, and it cannot fail to be both effective and de

LETTER X.

ECONOMY.

THERE is at least one incident recorded in the life of Joseph, that strikingly illustrates his foresight and sagacity in respect to the management of his worldly concerns. Immediately after his appointment to the office of governour of the land of Egypt, he went forth, in anticipation of the famine which had been divinely revealed to him as about to come upon the land, and gathered up all the food of the plenteous seven years which were then passing, and deposited it in the various cities, that it might be ready against the time of need. That anticipated period quickly came; and the consequence was that, while there was a universal famine prevailing, to use the language of the narrative, "in all lands," there was plenty of bread throughout the land of Egypt. It was a noble example for a ruler; and it conveys a

lesson of economy, which is especially worthy the attention of every young man.

But, before I attempt to enforce this lesson, I must say a word to guard you against confounding this virtue (for such the genuine quality really is,) with another quality which is often mistaken for it—viz: meanness in pecuniary transactions. This mistake has been made by those who have departed from true economy, on the right hand and on the left. There are some who actually exemplify the attribute of meanness, who contrive to protect themselves from self reproach by the reflection that they are only observing the rules of economy, and that economy is a noble virtue; while there are others who verge quite to the opposite extreme, and, in the exercise of a prodigal spirit, stigmatize as mean what is really nothing more than a becoming frugality. But names, after all, however much men may be deceived by them, do not affect things;—there is such a thing as economy, and there is such a thing as meanness; and they are as really distinct from each other, as any good quality and any bad quality that you can name.

The spirit which I am reprobating as being

sometimes confounded with economy, most frequently discovers itself in little things; and it never fails to impart a corresponding littleness to the entire character. It does not necessarily imply any intention to be dishonest, though it often runs to such a length that those who witness its operations, will wonder how they are to be reconciled with strict integrity. I have known some men of excellent talents, and otherwise of excellent character, who have well nigh ruined themselves with this spirit of pseudo-economy. Nay, I have known men of great conscientiousness, and I have no doubt of sincere piety, who withal were in the habit of contributing largely to the great objects of Christian benevolence, who yet, from education or habit, were so insufferably mean, that a liberal mind could scarcely think of them with patience. The secret of this no doubt generally is, that, with perhaps a naturally money-loving spirit, they have been early constrained to the greatest economy in order to secure an education or raise themselves in life; and, as a consequence, they have acquired a sort of penurious and miserly habit, which, though it may yield to the triumph of conscience and principle

in greater matters, shows itself unconquered in respect to the less. I remember to have heard of a New England governour, who, many years ago, was crossing a ferry on his way to the seat of government, and, on being landed, asked the ferryman what he had to pay. The ferryman, presuming that it would be safe to trust to the honour and self respect of so distinguished a personage, replied, "What you please, sir;" expecting that he should receive at least double the usual fee. The governour handed him out a piece of money which was only half the fee to which he was legally entitled, and remarked that "he would not stand for change!" It is, to say the least, an awkward thing for a governour to sell his dignity for a New-York sixpence.

Against this spirit I entreat you, as you value your standing and influence in society, to be on your guard. The reputation of being poor never need terrify you; for poverty in itself is not dishonourable;—but to be regarded, and deservedly regarded, mean, were an evil to which no earthly advantage should be considered an adequate offset. Be careful that you do not put your reputation at hazard in this way, even by equivocal

acts. If your circumstances will not permit you to appear generous, by meeting claims that are made upon you, and that you might be expected promptly to answer, let an honest statement of your circumstances prevent all misapprehension of your motives. If the stigma of meanness is once fastened upon you, there is great reason to fear that, in spite of all you can do, it will remain upon you for life; and even if you should attempt to retrieve your character by subsequent acts of generosity, you need not wonder if it should be said that this is all a matter of calculation and effort, and that you have just as much the heart of a miser or a niggard as ever.

Having said thus much to guard you against a perversion of the quality which I would recommend, I am now prepared to urge upon your consideration the virtue itself—in other words, to illustrate the importance of strict economy in your pecuniary concerns.

It is important that you should practise economy in the management of your business. Suppose you are devoted to mercantile pursuits—without that rigid economy which is the result of much forethought and calculation, you can have no

reasonable hope of success; for, though you may have ever so large a capital to trade upon, you will find that it will not be proof against a negligent and random sort of management. If you are careless in your purchases, and careless in your sales, and careless in your charges, you will inevitably reap the fruit of your carelessness in the gradual diminution, and, at no distant period, the complete wreck of your property. If you will be a successful merchant, you must husband your means with the utmost care, and ever be on the alert to avert threatening losses, and to avail yourself of every fair and honourable advantage. And so in regard to every other occupation—if you are a mechanic, or a physician, or a lawyer, you ought to realize the legitimate benefits of your profession; and this you can never do without adhering to strict economy.

Nor is there less need of economy in regard to your personal expenses; in which I include dress, furniture, equipage—every thing that enters into one's mode of living. And here allow me to make a remark to guard you against what I am constrained to consider one of the ultraisms of the day:—viz. that the same general style of living

should be observed by all without reference to the circumstances in which Providence has placed them; and that those who have large estates, whether by inheritance or by their own acquisition, have no right to appropriate any part of their wealth for their own personal gratification, above what is necessary to their bare subsistence in the plainest manner. Now, I do not believe a word of this. It is evidently the design of Providence that there should be distinctions in society; these distinctions are clearly recognized in scripture; and though they are capable of being greatly perverted and abused, yet, in themselves, they are not sinful—they are even necessary to the accomplishment of the greatest good, and the enjoyment of the highest happiness. I say then, that this levelling system which would tear up all the carpets from our floors, and substitute for elegant furniture the plainest utensils, and carry us far back toward the ages of barbarism, however its advocates may urge it under the plea of benevolence or even piety, receives no countenance either from the word or the Providence of God. If you are in affluent circumstances, you have a right to live more expensively than if you

were in indigence; and if you gather around you some of the luxuries and elegances of life, I do not believe that you are chargeable with wrong. But, after all, the obligations of economy rest on you, just as truly as if you were poor. You are bound to take heed that your property does not go needlessly to waste; and that you do not indulge your elegant tastes at the expense of the claims of either justice or charity. That is certainly a criminal extravagance that appropriates great possessions to mere purposes of worldly splendour, and turns a deaf ear to the imploring voice of human want.

But it is the few only who are rich: the great mass are in circumstances of mediocrity or comparative indigence: and these should practise a degree of economy corresponding to the condition in which Providence has placed them. They should be particularly careful that their expenses are not greater than are justified by their income; and if there should be a necessity to curtail them, they should never hesitate from an apprehension of awakening suspicion in regard to their worldly circumstances. There are some young men, whom every body knows to be poor, who yet

have a perfect passion to surround themselves with the insignia of opulence. They dress in an extravagant style, and ride in an expensive carriage, and, on all public occasions particularly, appear unusually flush of their money, with the idea of hiding from the world their poverty, or possibly of making the appearance of wealth a bait to some young girl who happens to possess the reality. But such experiments only demonstrate the folly of those who make them. Let a young man who is poor thus try to appear wealthy, or let one only get the reputation of living in a style which his income does not warrant, and, from that hour, there will come a shade over his character: he will be looked upon, at least, with suspicion, if he is not set down as absolutely untrustworthy.

There are two powerful reasons suggested by the history of Joseph, why every young man should cultivate the virtue which I am recommending. The first is connected with a suitable providence in regard to the future. Joseph, in the prospect of the years of famine, made provision for them during the years of plenty; and it was this only that enabled him to meet the

demands of his people for bread. *He* indeed was apprized of the approaching dearth, by divine intimation; but *you* are left to the calculations of an unassisted foresight. This much, however, you know—that your lot is cast in a world of vicissitude; that riches often take to themselves wings and fly away; and that in the changes of business and the chances of adventure, even the richest man in the community has no security that he may not lose every thing. Here then is a reason why you should look to what you possess with the strictest care; why you should not, from inconsideration or neglect, run the chance of losing it. You imagine perhaps that you have no particular need of economy, as you have enough to live upon now, and you do not think it well to be anxious for the future. Certainly you should not indulge an *undue* solicitude; but there is a degree of forethought which you are bound to take and without which your prospect is shrouded in gloom. If you have enough, and only enough to support you now, what will you do in the time of sickness, when you will be unable to labour;—what, in the winter season of old age, if you should be spared to that period,—

when the grasshopper shall be a burden, and the almond tree flourish? Surely, you will not wish then to be dependant on the charity of the world. Cultivate economy then now, as the preventive of such a calamity; and, if no such exigency should arise, you need not fear but that your earnings may still be appropriated to bless and comfort your fellow creatures.

And this leads me to advert to the other reason which Joseph's experience suggests for your cultivating this habit—I mean the ability which it will secure to you of administering to the wants of others—of helping forward the great cause of Christian charity. Though it does not appear that Joseph, when he evinced such provident regard for the future, by laying up corn in store-houses, had any intimation that he would ever have an opportunity of relieving the wants of his own family, yet so it turned out: when they might otherwise have perished from the famine, they were supplied, through his provident bounty, with every comfort that they could desire; and especially he had the privilege of ministering to the necessities of his aged father, from whom he had suffered a long and cruel exile. Is it not worth

while to practise economy, even in the possibility of such a result? Perhaps, by this means, you may be enabled to invite your parents, in the decline of life, to come and make their residence by the side of you, and to find their wants all supplied from your filial bounty; or else, if you are separated from them, you may gladden their hearts by sending them the requisite supplies—the fruit of your habitual economy. Or else, like Joseph, you may have brothers who are in need—possibly brothers who, by some visitation of Providence, are rendered unable to help themselves—what a comfort would it be to you to be able to stretch out the hand of charity towards them, and to offer them perhaps a quiet home and a comfortable support! But even if you should have no relatives to require your assistance, you live in a world that is full of the suffering poor; in a world where the blessings of Christianity are yet but partially diffused; in a world where money—worthless as we sometimes account it—will avail to a thousand purposes of human happiness and improvement. Do you not aspire to the privilege of being a benefactor to your fellow creatures? Is there not a chord strung in your heart, that

vibrates gratefully to the thought that your earnings may tell on the best interests of many whom you will never see on earth—that the blessing of some who are ready to perish may come upon you? Then, I say, yet once more, practise the virtue of economy. Live frugally that you may live not for yourself alone; that if you do not leave behind you wealth to be distributed for the benefit of others, you may at least leave behind you an example which it will be for the interest of others to imitate.

LETTER XI.

DIGNITY.

THERE are two senses in which the word *dignity* in relation to man may be considered. It may have respect either to the character or the manners—to the inward feeling or the external conduct. An individual may possess dignity of character—in other words, true nobleness of

mind — and yet, owing to some defect either of constitution or of education, there may be but a very imperfect external development of it; though, in most cases, there is no defect which may not be remedied by suitable culture. And on the other hand, it is quite possible that an individual may exhibit much of the appearance of dignity, without any of those feelings with which the genuine quality is identified — his manners may be characterized by the absence of every thing light and frivolous, by a winning gracefulness, and apparently by a suitable regard to the company in which he mingles; and yet, after all, this may be the result of calculation and nothing else — in other words, it may be a matter of deliberate and studied artifice. The dignity which I would recommend, and of which Joseph was an illustrious example, is at once the dignity of principle, of feeling, and of action. In a word, it is an all pervading attribute of the man.

There is not a single incident in Joseph's history, that even seems to involve the least departure from true dignity — on the contrary, this beautiful quality was reflected in every more important action of his life. You never find him

forgetting the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, or the relations which he sustained to those around him; but, on all occasions, he is influenced by the most delicate sense of propriety, and seems always instinctively to do the very thing which the most mature consideration would have prompted. Whether he was a slave or a governour, whether in the palace or in the prison, there was a discreet and thoughtful manner—a delightful appropriateness in all his conduct, that revealed the inward workings of a great and noble spirit.

Taking for granted that true dignity has its foundation in virtuous dispositions, and is itself either the principle or the expression of a lofty form of virtue, let me call your attention briefly to some of its more prominent ingredients—to some of those qualities, both as it respects the inner and the outer man, which you must diligently cultivate, if you would furnish an example of this noble characteristic.

I would say then, in the first place, the utmost purity—purity of conduct, of conversation, of thought and feeling—is essential to true dignity. I have had occasion to remark, in a preceding letter, that there is nothing so degrading to our

nature—nothing that approaches so nearly to the putting off of the man and the putting on of the brute, as the habit of excessive sensual indulgence. No matter what else an individual may be, if he surrenders himself to the tyranny of his bodily appetites, he is, in the worst sense, a slave—he may indeed play the tyrant toward others, but it is impossible that he should hold them in so degrading a bondage as that of which he is himself the subject. It is possible indeed, that one may be a sensualist in thought and feeling, and, to the eye of God, may appear in all the guilt and pollution that belongs to such a character, and yet, by the exercise of great self restraint, may pass with the world for a man of a clean heart; but, in all ordinary cases, the impure fountain in the soul will send forth streams not less visible and palpable than loathsome and contaminating. Let a man be known to belong to this class, and he can never pass, even with dissolute men themselves, for a person of true dignity. He may possess every external attraction, he may be at home in the most polished circles, he may be a thoroughly educated and accomplished man,—and yet, if he is understood to be a libertine, his

very name is a synonyme for a debasing loathsomeness.

Let me entreat you then, my young friends, as you would possess not only the reputation of being dignified, but the substantial quality also, to exercise the utmost self control in regard to the bodily appetites. And to this end, endeavour, so far as possible, to keep out of the reach of temptation. Forbid your imagination to wander amidst objects or scenes of a polluting character; and, if you find it inclined to these unhallowed excursions, let the energy of your whole soul be put in requisition to restrain it. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; for if an evil heart is the natural fountain of vulgar and licentious conversation, such conversation in turn renders the heart more prolific of evil. I might urge you to the cultivation of this inward purity from other considerations; particularly as it identifies itself with your happiness both in this world and the next; but this and other views of the subject, I must be contented to leave to your own private reflection.

Another leading element of a dignified character is discretion—by which I intend an accurate

discernment united with a due degree of caution. I am well aware that there is a great diversity in the original constitutions of men in this respect;—that, while some are naturally impetuous and, in a great measure, thoughtless of consequences, others are naturally considerate, and rarely say or do an important thing which is not the result of previous reflection. But, notwithstanding this original difference, there is no doubt that discretion, like any other good quality, is susceptible of being cultivated; and no one is excusable in the eye either of God or man—let his constitutional tendencies be what they may—who fails to possess it. Without it, an individual will be continually saying and doing unfit things; and though many of his errours may be the result of ignorance, yet, as that ignorance results from the want of due reflection and attention, it will not, and ought not to be admitted as an apology. In the intercourse of society, how often are the feelings of individuals severely tried, and a whole circle perhaps thrown into the greatest embarrassment, by a single remark which the least particle of discretion would have prevented; while the person uttering the remark thereby renders his presence unwelcome, and

perhaps creates a painful association in the minds of those who hear it, that will never be removed. No person with this kind of spirit ever possessed true dignity of manners. I do not say that something like this may not and does not often exist in connection with general good intentions—if you please, with the spirit of benevolence and devotion; but you may rest assured that, wherever it exists, it mars the character, and interferes with the legitimate influence of any good qualities with which it happens to be associated.

Simplicity and modesty, in opposition to all affected and consequential airs, belong also to true dignity. And yet there are young men not a few, who suppose themselves dignified in the view of the world, just in proportion to the number of these airs which they are able to assume. You converse with them, and you see that their conversation, instead of being free and natural, is characterized by unceasing effort—effort to say things which the circumstances neither suggest nor warrant, but which are supposed to illustrate their own fancied superiority. Not unfrequently the same feeling is

betrayed in the air with which they walk the streets, and especially with which they enter any publick place of resort, where they suppose the eyes of the multitude are turned upon them. You will never find young men of this character in the company of their superiors — they may indeed be surrounded by men venerable for their age and standing in society — men who may have a character for greatness as well as goodness that reaches beyond their own country; and yet these striplings, nothing daunted by such company, will talk on with oracular confidence, and with a pertness that knows not how to blush. If you will cultivate true dignity, you must have no communion with an assuming or arrogant spirit. I would not, by any means, have you yield to an unbecoming diffidence, which would render you at once awkward and uncomfortable, and would also be inconsistent with suitable self-respect; nevertheless, whatever your talents or acquirements may be, I would have you bear in mind that you are a young man, and as such, are bound to show a modest deference toward your superiors in age, especially if, as is very likely to be the case, they are also your superiors in wisdom. In

the expression of your opinion, always show a becoming respect towards those who differ from you; and, however freely you may give reasons to justify it, let there be nothing in your manner that shall seem to claim for yourself the attribute of infallibility.

Closely allied to the qualities of which I have just spoken is courtesy—or general politeness connected with kindness. The importance of this, both to one's comfort and usefulness, is generally but very inadequately estimated; and for want of duly cultivating it, many persons of great minds and good hearts, go through life without ever passing for any thing more than ordinary men. Genuine courtesy will throw an atmosphere around you which will render it delightful to be in your company. It will not lead you to burden your friends with forced expressions of kindness, or to urge upon them hospitalities which you know they cannot accept, or to give them your time when it is demanded by urgent and indispensable duties. It will not lead you to treat every body with the same degree of confidence and warmth, leaving each one to suppose, provided he can be duped into it, that he is your peculiar favourite,

and that, if you should ever have high places at your disposal, he should occupy the very highest. No, this neither constitutes true courtesy, nor is consistent with it. But it *does* belong to this quality, to dictate a considerate regard to the character and feelings of all with whom you mingle. It will prompt you to acts of civility and respect, even where you are unable to confer substantial favours; and thus will impress itself most gratefully and indelibly on the memories of those toward whom it is exercised. I could almost say that I had rather have a request refused by some men than to have it granted by others; for, while one would satisfy me of his earnest desire to meet my wishes, and of his sincere regret that he was unable to do it, and would, by his whole manner, leave upon my mind an impression of his good will and generosity, another would indeed give me what I asked, but would do it in such an ungracious way, and perhaps with so much of the spirit of fault finding, that I should go away thinking little of the accommodation which I had received, in comparison with the uncomfortable and freezing interview with which it had been connected.

If you will cultivate true courtesy, you must cultivate true benevolence; for without benevolent feelings, there is really no foundation for genuine politeness. You must acquire a suitable degree of self command in order to save yourself from awkward embarrassment. And you must have that knowledge of the forms of society which shall make you at home in the various circles into which you may be cast. Let me say, you may derive great advantage in this respect, from contemplating the characters of those who have been eminent for this quality—of such men, for instance, as Wilberforce and Thornton, and I will venture to add, as one of the finest models, that I have ever met with—our own lamented Stephen Van Rensselaer. By holding to your mind the record of what they were, you will insensibly imbibe the same spirit which animated them, and, under its influence, will exhibit somewhat of a corresponding deportment. Nay, think it not strange that I recommend to your special study and imitation in this respect, the example of the Saviour of the world; for I need not say that he was a perfect model of propriety in every relation.

Moreover, you can never possess true dignity, without decision of character. You may indeed possess many amiable and winning qualities without it — you may have the amiableness that conciliates, and the gracefulness that fascinates, and you may have fine intellectual powers that will render it an object with many to seek your company; and yet, after all, if you lack firmness of purpose — if you are at the mercy of every breath of influence that may happen to fall upon you, you lack one of the most essential elements of true dignity. A vacillating character can never command respect where once it has come to be understood. Whatever good qualities there may be connected with it, the simple fact that you know not where to find the individual, and that his opinion on any subject one month is no indication what it may be the next, throws around him an air of insignificance which no redeeming traits will enable you to forget. I am aware that firmness is sometimes mistaken for obstinacy, and obstinacy for firmness; but the difference is that the one yields to the power of evidence — the other is unyielding in spite of evidence. If a fickle mind marks one as the subject of weakness,

an obstinate mind is no less indicative of ignorance, passion, or prejudice. Cultivate firmness; but beware both of fickleness and obstinacy.

If I were to counsel you, in a single word, in respect to the best means of attaining that dignity of character which has been the subject of this letter, I should say—endeavour first to form a proper estimate of your relations and circumstances, and then let your conduct be strictly conformed to this estimate. Treat every body around you just in the manner in which the relation you sustain to them requires. Your superiors in age or standing, always treat with deferential respect. In your intercourse with your equals, be careful that your familiarity never degenerates into a violation of the proprieties of life. Towards those whom Providence has placed below you, always be civil and obliging, and do not attempt unduly to magnify the difference that separates you from them. Remember that true dignity is independent of the distinctions of life—that you may possess your millions and yet be absolutely destitute of it—that you may be in absolute poverty, and yet be a noble example of it.

LETTER XII.

SYMPATHY.

The whole tenour of the history of Joseph shows that he had a warm and generous heart; that he was at the greatest remove from a selfish spirit; thus his sensibilities could never slumber, when any of the various forms of human wo were passing under his eye. But there is one incident in particular, to which I design chiefly to refer as an illustration of this feature of his character — I mean the interest which he manifested in behalf of his fellow prisoners, when they were perplexed from not being able to understand their own dreams.

The butler and the baker each had a dream, which they suspected was of ominous import; and when Joseph, who had, by that time, been made a sort of overseer of his fellow prisoners, came in in the morning to inspect his charge, he found these two men looking very sorrowful, as

if they were apprehending some great calamity. On inquiring concerning the cause of their dejection, he was informed that each of them had had a mysterious dream which they were unable to interpret; upon which, Joseph, having recognized the fact that "all interpretations belong to God," requested them, each to give a particular relation of his dream. This being done, he proceeded at once to act as interpreter; and though the interpretation in the two cases was widely different,—that in relation to the butler pointing to a speedy restoration to his office, and that concerning the baker to his being hung up on a tree—yet it was sympathy in Joseph that led him to undertake the interpretation; and however painful the result was in respect to the latter, it was an act of kindness in him to reveal to the poor fellow his fate, that he might be induced to make good use of the brief period he had to live. Herein, my young friends, is Joseph an example to you; and happy shall I be, if any thing that I can say shall encourage or assist you to the cultivation of the same praiseworthy spirit.

There is a sort of spurious sensibility, which

Christianity, benevolence, sincerity, all disown. I mean that sensibility which can come bravely into exercise at the tale of imaginary suffering; which can weep away a whole evening over a play, or a whole week over a novel; but has no tears to shed, and no relief to offer, for objects of real distress. This miserable sentimentality, (for of sensibility it does not deserve the name) instead of being an honour, is a disgrace, to human nature; and it finds its reward in dreaming about the exquisiteness and luxury of its own exercises. It is the creature of infidel philosophy. Its field is an imaginary world. It never blesses man—it never pleases God.

Very unlike this was the feeling which Joseph manifested in the case to which I have adverted. It was not an indolent and selfish feeling that was indulged merely for its own sake, but a generous and practical feeling that wakened into exercise the active powers, and prompted to an effort for the relief of suffering. Nor was there any parade about Joseph's sympathy. It does not appear that he spent a moment in expressing his commiseration for their lot; though, if he had not been deeply affected by it, he never would have thus

enlisted in their behalf; — but he went directly to the work of interpreting their dreams; and thus the sympathy which he felt for them turned to a good account. It was sympathy ripening into charity — it was feeling passing into action.

There is a chord strung in the human heart that naturally vibrates to the notes of sorrow; though it must be acknowledged that all are not constituted alike in this respect, and that the original principle is capable of being weakened or strengthened, of receiving a right or wrong direction, according to the influences to which it is subjected. Your duty is to cherish this principle, and bring it into exercise, under the guiding, purifying, elevating influences of Christianity. You are to keep alive that feeling for another's wo, that shall lead you, not indeed without suitable discrimination — for indiscriminate sympathy, or rather charity, often fails of its object — but according to the dictates of an enlightened judgment, to administer such relief as may be in your power.

In such a world as this, you can never be at a loss where to look for objects that deserve your sympathy. They are all around you, and meet

you at every turn of life. And they live in distant regions which your vision will never penetrate. But even these are legitimate objects of your sympathy; for the story of their degradation and wretchedness has reached you; and if the mind comprehends, it is not necessary that the eye should see, in order that the heart may feel. And it is a delightful feature in the aspects of Providence, that there is no part of the world so dark or so distant, but that you may gain access to it, at least by your charities and prayers. The inhabitant of Hindostan or California may receive blessings, which, but for your sympathy, never would have reached him, and which may make him rich to all eternity. But let us traverse together this wide field on which your sympathies may legitimately operate; and let me point out to you a few of the particular cases from which you may not — if you have the right spirit — will not, turn away.

The first, and perhaps the most common, case that presents itself, is that of bereavement. Death is doing his work, continually, every where. Nothing is more common than for the families in which you are most intimate, to be

thrown into the depths of affliction by the sudden removal to the grave of some one of their number. Stay not needlessly away from such a dwelling; for you may rest assured that the language of condolence falls sweetly upon the mourner's ear. Your friends will love to hear you speak of their departed friend; and especially if you go in the spirit of a Christian, you will carry a balm to their wounded hearts. There is indeed great delicacy to be observed in regard to the sorrows of others—especially that overwhelming flood of grief that follows a sudden bereavement; and there may be circumstances in which it is fitting that you should refrain from visiting them, at least till the first gush of agonized feeling is past; but as soon as propriety will admit, you should repair to their dwellings as a sympathizing friend. And where this is not practicable, by reason of distance or any other unfavourable circumstance, you may often advantageously express your sympathy by writing a letter; for while it will be a comfort to your afflicted friends to know that you are thinking of them in their sorrow, you may be able to connect with your expressions of condolence some good and fitting counsels, that shall

aid to a right improvement of their trials. And let me say that this last office is one that is peculiarly needful to be discharged towards a person in deep affliction; for there is always danger that, by brooding incessantly over his loss, his mind may acquire that morbid habit, of which a complaining spirit is the leading element, and from which the transition will be to a deeper neglect of the most important interests.

Sickness is another form of trouble that may well call forth your sympathy—sickness under any circumstances, but more especially, when it is found in connection with poverty. Such scenes as this, you must go out of the world, if you will avoid; and if your residence happens to be in a large city, a little familiarity, especially with the outskirts and the obscurer parts of the city, will reveal to you scenes of this description more numerous and more distressing, than you had perhaps ever imagined. Sickness alone is bad enough—sickness, when surrounded with all the alleviations and appliances that wealth and friendship can furnish, is not an easy thing to be borne, as every one who has had experience will testify. But when poverty comes to be mingled in the

same cup, and the patient has no home but a hovel, and no bed but a pallet of straw, and no accommodations of any kind but such as accidental charity may have brought to him — be assured that sickness in these circumstances becomes quite another thing; and sympathy for such a sufferer, it would seem the most insensible heart could not suppress. I counsel you, instead of avoiding such scenes, because they are painful or disgusting, to turn in at such a dwelling as often as your circumstances will permit. Be not afraid to stand by the bed side of the sick and the dying, though every thing may tell of the most squalid poverty and the deepest degradation. Stand there, if it may not be as a comforter to the body, at least as a guide and counsellor to the spirit. Bring remedies and comforts to the sick man, if you can; and if God raises him up, he will bless you for your generous remembrance of him in the time of his need; and if he have been hitherto a neglecter of his immortal interests, you will be able the more easily to gain his ear in speaking to him concerning them. Or if he should die, who can tell but that what you say to him on his death bed, may be the means, by God's

blessing, of fitting him for Heaven — but that your kind and christian counsels to his family, together with your earnest prayers in their behalf, may lead them to seek and find the consolations of the gospel?

There are many cases of spiritual distress also that invite your sympathy. The careless world, I know, make but little account of these cases; and yet they who have had experience know that there is no suffering on earth so bitter as that which they involve. The sinner awakened from his dreams of carelessness to a sense of his relations to God as his Lawgiver and Judge, is not unfrequently, for a long time, subject to the most tormenting reflections; the remembrance of his sins, of which he once thought nothing, haunts him by day and by night; remorse becomes a settled resident in his bosom; and sometimes despair — absolute despair, throws her deep shadows around him. And then again, there are cases in which professing Christians, owing perhaps to some delinquency or some infirmity, come to believe that theirs has been a spurious religious experience; and, in the strength of this conviction, they are for a long time buried in

spiritual gloom. If you are not a true Christian yourself, such cases as these will be little likely to awaken your sympathy, because the distress which belongs to them not only lies without the circle of your experience, but cannot be adequately appreciated by you; but if you have been the subject of a spiritual renovation, you cannot be brought in contact with persons in these circumstances without feeling for them deeply; and your sympathy will naturally discover itself in an effort for their relief. You will direct them to the fountain of grace and comfort that is set open in the gospel. You will set forth distinctly and fully the terms on which the blessings of salvation are offered. You will endeavour to correct mistakes, to solve difficulties, to do every thing that you can, to bring the darkened mind, writing bitter things against itself, in contact with the glorious promises. And you have every reason to hope that your sympathy thus expressed in a well-directed labour of love, will avail even to the most important purposes — to bring the awakened sinner to the cross of Christ, and lead the despondING Christian to rejoice again in the evidence of the divine favour.

There is, moreover, a wide field for your sympathy in the condition of the careless and ungodly world—of the multitude around you, some of whom are sunk in ignorance and vice—the slaves of sensuality and the dupes of a false religion, and others are decent respecters of Christian institutions, but neglecters of the great salvation. And then there are the hundreds of millions, who have been born and educated under Pagan and Mohamedan influences; who are hastening to the close of life, ignorant of life's great end, and seeing nothing before them but an impenetrable darkness. With all these, if you are a true Christian, you must feel a lively sympathy; and that sympathy may find expression, sometimes in your personal counsels and expostulations, and sometimes in your pecuniary contributions and prayers. That professing Christian who keeps his hand clenched against the claims of those whom his voice cannot reach, who is willing occasionally to drop a word of advice upon the ear, but is never found dropping his contribution into the charity box, had better examine his sympathy, lest it should prove to be that which meets the

sufferer's application with the answer, "Be ye warmed and be ye clothed, depart in peace."

I will only add, that the sufferings of the oppressed, present a claim upon your sympathy—I mean especially, the oppressed in our own happy, yet dishonoured country. Let no man tell me that the slave who has nothing that he can call his own—not even his wife and children—no, nor yet himself, is after all not an object to be pitied. If the poor creature who says this, will consent to change places with him, then we will believe that he is himself rather to be pitied as a fool, than abhorred as a knave. But the truth is, no man in the exercise of sober reason ever believed this. Slavery is an evil, the depth of which there is no line to measure. Its subject is robbed of the rights which God has given him—the right even to be a man. I have no sympathy with the violent and denunciatory spirit on this subject that has of late years been going forth through the land, not only because it is wrong in itself, but because its tendency manifestly is to retard and embarrass the cause of emancipation. The whole subject is certainly encompassed with great difficulties, and involves complicated and

delicate relations which must not be overlooked; but, instead of yielding to these difficulties, we are bound to rise with the magnitude of the occasion, and urge to some effective, and, if possible, speedy, measures, by which we may cancel this debt which we owe, as a nation, to justice and humanity. I counsel you not to repress, but to cultivate your sympathy for the poor slave; and if you do not live to see his chain broken, be able at least to reflect, when you die, that you have borne testimony against the reproach, and that whatsoever your hand found to do, you have done, for wiping it away.

LETTER XIII.

FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

Never, perhaps, was there an individual who had deeper injuries to forgive, and never one who forgave more cordially and promptly, than Joseph. As the facts which illustrate this trait in his

character are interwoven with his whole history, and as I shall have occasion to advert to them somewhat in detail as I pass along, I shall not, at this point, attempt any thing like a connected view of them. The injurious treatment which Joseph received, has been brought to your consideration in a preceding letter; and, in connection with it, the dangers to which all young men are exposed, who are placed in similar circumstances. My design now is, to illustrate the noble spirit of forgiveness which Joseph evinced towards those who persecuted him, as an example for *you* amidst the provocations and insults which you may probably have to encounter.

Forgiveness is nothing more than the spirit of benevolence acting itself out in an appropriate manner towards one who has intentionally injured you. Suppose an individual — be it that it is one of your own companions — has wantonly and malignantly assailed your character, or injured your property, or deprived you of some legitimate right — what course, under these circumstances, are you to adopt in respect to him? Doubtless, if you take counsel of the evil propensities of your nature, or the corrupt maxims of the world, you

will set yourself to devise some effective mode of retaliation. But if you yield to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, or if you consult the teachings of the Great Master as recorded in his word, you will adopt a very different course — you will not only suppress a malevolent spirit, but you will call into exercise a benevolent one: you will turn away from all those considerations which are fitted to wound and exasperate, and keep in your eye those only which are adapted to preserve or restore the calmness of your mind, and to favour a speedy reconciliation.

But to be more particular — you are to inquire, in the first place, whether you have not given some occasion for the injury that has been done you; or, if you are conscious of innocent intentions, whether some action of yours may not have been misconstrued, and whether from that misconstruction may not have originated the injustice that you have received. In the former case, your duty manifestly is to confess — in the latter, to explain; and if you suffer carelessness, or an imagined self respect, or any thing else, to prevent you from doing this at the very earliest moment, you are, in a measure at least, responsi-

ble for the injury of which you complain. If you have really been the aggressor in any degree, or have given the semblance of provocation for the affront you have received, — so far regard yourself as the offender; and do not shrink from the most frank and manly reparation. Or, if you have been suspected of something of which you were innocent, you are bound, if you can, to furnish to the individual, evidence of your innocence, that he may see there was no just ground for the evil he had done you. Having done this, you have done all in the character of an offender or a supposed offender, which, at this point, either justice or charity demands of you.

But, let us consider your attitude now as changed, and inquire whether you have any duty to perform towards an enemy beyond the point which we have reached — in other words, supposing you have made every apology and explanation that could be required of you, — are you absolved from all farther obligation in respect to the offending individual? I answer, by no means. You may have done every thing that you can *directly* to bring about a reconciliation; but there may be indirect means which it is in your

power to use, which may not improbably prove effectual when the others have failed. You may, for instance, in your casual meetings with the individual in social life, or even in the street, make it manifest by your manner that you are cherishing towards him no ill will, and that it is not your own fault that the alienation is continued. You may sometimes accomplish much through the interposition of some friend whose general opinion he respects, and who, he would not be likely to suppose, could be influenced by any undue regard to your interests. You should watch for opportunities of doing him good, where you can, without the appearance of being obtrusive, as if you would make a display of your magnanimity; and especially you should avail yourself of such opportunities as may occur when he is in affliction; for the heart is never so sensible to favours, as when smitten by the rod of God; and a revengeful spirit is never so easily dislodged by kindness, as when that kindness is delicately manifested to assuage the current of grief. You should keep an eye out to observe the least indication of a willingness to be reconciled; and you should promptly avail yourself of

it to institute the most effective measures for consummating the desired object. You should not be strict to require the most exact reparation for the injury you have received; but should show yourself willing to accept even what you may deem but a partial reparation; and if the individual, from pride or any other cause, refuses to make any reparation at all, other than is involved in a disposition to return to the mutual interchange of friendly feelings and good offices —though this certainly would not be so satisfactory as could be desired, yet it would be your wisdom to accept even of this, and let the rest be an account for him to settle with his own conscience. But suppose all your efforts to bring about a reconciliation prove futile, and after the utmost you can do, you can find no access to his heart, and he shows himself determined to hold no other than a hostile attitude towards you— why then nothing remains for you but to keep your heart with all diligence in relation to him, and obey that injunction of the Saviour from which no possible circumstances can ever absolve you, —"Love your enemies, bless them that curse

you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

There are several mistakes into which you are liable to fall in relation to the general subject of forgiveness of injuries, which the contemplation of Joseph's example will be likely to prevent. Let me call your attention to two or three of them.

You may be liable to take up the opinion that while the smaller injuries to which you are exposed may well enough be met with a forgiving spirit, there are some injuries that are too great to be forgiven, and which no one *can* forgive in consistency with suitable self respect. But who, let me ask, ever experienced greater injuries than Joseph? His brethren had no ground of accusation against him — he seems to have been entirely an amiable, gentle, unassuming youth; and even when he was seized, he was out upon an errand that showed the kindness of his heart. What they first intended to do was to put him to death, outright; and then the expedient of throwing him into the pit was thought of; and finally they formed and executed the horrible purpose of selling him as a slave, with no other expectation

than that he would never behold the faces of any of his kindred again, and that, henceforth, till death should come to his release, he would always be subject to the will of some cruel taskmaster. Conceive, if you can, of injury more deep, more bitter, than was here inflicted; and yet it was not too great for the amiable Joseph to forgive. When, years after this, he met his brethren in Egypt, and those melting scenes which the history relates, occurred,—though Joseph fully appreciated the extent of the injury, and had all the cruel looks and words and actions which had been directed against him, treasured up in his memory, yet he forgave every thing: he met the offenders—great offenders as they were—in the spirit of a generous reconciliation. And so, my young friends, ought it ever to be with you. No matter what may be the wrong that has been done you, you have no right to cherish a malevolent or unforgiving spirit for a moment. Does Joseph's character seem less attractive to you for his having forgiven his brethren even the sin of fratricide toward him? Rather, is it not the greatness of the injury that throws such superlative lustre around the forgiving act? Imitate

Joseph in forgiving great injuries; and if there are those who sneer at this as indicating tameness or servility, you will have nothing to fear; for it is a light thing to bear the sneers, either of base hypocrites or of miserable fools.

It was an aggravating circumstance in the case of Joseph, that the injuries which he received were from his own brethren — children of the same father — the nearest relatives that he had on earth. You may observe, as a general rule, that quarrels in families are the bitterest quarrels that ever occur; and where two brothers become alienated from each other — no matter from what cause — reconciliation becomes exceedingly difficult, if not absolutely hopeless. It would seem that, where an alienation is once effected in such a case, its intensity is generally proportioned to the strength of the affection which it has displaced. It may result from various causes; but probably it originates more frequently in the distribution of the parental inheritance than any thing else. Let those who sustain to each other this endearing relation, be careful that it never becomes poisoned by dissension and crimination. Rather submit in silence to what you may deem great injustice,

than run the hazard of opening a domestic quarrel. Or, if you are so unhappy as to be already engaged in one, resolve, before reading another sentence of this letter, that you will instantly drop it. It is at too great expense that you quarrel with your own brother. Let the breach be continued a little longer, and it may be impossible ever to repair it; and you may be obliged to carry with you to the grave the reflection that he who should have been a chief mourner at your funeral, if he is there at all, will be there only as a matter of decency and constraint.

It is worthy of remark that Joseph forgave his brethren, when he had them entirely in his power —just as entirely as they had *him*, when they inflicted the injury. However weak and defenceless he was when they met him at Dothan, he was surrounded with the insignia of office when they found him in Egypt—the little unprotected boy had become the governour of the land; and he could do with them whatsoever he listed without being called in question for any course that he might adopt. He might have banished them instantly from his dominion, or he might

have consigned them to perpetual imprisonment, or he might have served them as the poor baker was served, whose dream he had occasion to interpret; but, instead of adopting any such rigorous and retaliatory measures, he freely forgave them the injury. Perhaps, in certain cases, where you consider yourself aggrieved, you will seem ready enough to forgive—particularly in cases where the offender may be useful to you, and you can anticipate no advantage from persisting in your resentment;—but are you equally disposed to reconciliation, where you have him entirely in your power, and can do him a serious injury, perhaps without incurring the odium of it before the world? While a case of this kind involves great temptation to cultivate an implacable spirit, it furnishes a fine opportunity to display a magnanimous one. If you forgive only where your own personal interest would manifestly be promoted by it, and where you have little or no power to inflict an injury, it may be worth while for you to inquire whether you have really exercised the forgiving spirit at all. If your enemy is in your power, let him feel, so far as any act of injustice is concerned, that he is

safe in your power. Never take any advantage in respect to him, that you would not feel justified in taking, if he were your friend. It is not only unjust, but mean and cowardly, to do him an injury, because you *can* do it—perhaps without detection.

Joseph manifested a forgiving spirit by a corresponding course of action. He ultimately took from his brethren every ground of suspicion in regard to his sincerity, by performing towards them a succession of the most fraternal and generous acts. He not only relieved their immediate necessities, but made provision for their permanent subsistence in circumstances in every way the most agreeable to them. Here again, I commend him to you as a model. I have known cases, not a few, in which individuals have deceived themselves in supposing that they had forgiven an enemy, when they had reached the point of being willing not to attempt to injure him— willing to let him alone; and yet I have generally remarked that, where this negative course was professed, a more positive course was practised; and that, on some occasions at least, the individual supposed to be forgiven, would be

the object, if not of direct attacks, yet of offensive allusions. The truth is, you utterly mistake, if you imagine that you have forgiven an enemy when you have only got so far as to pass him in silence and neglect. You must be able to meet him with feelings and demonstrations of good will. And the more decisive these demonstrations are, the better—the better for him—the better for yourself. If, after a professed reconciliation, your conduct towards him savours of shyness, and is at best of an equivocal character, he will have no confidence in your professions, and you will have no comfort in his society; and you will both probably settle down with the conviction that, though you have gone through the form of reconciliation, the old grudge holds good. But if, on the contrary, you meet him in the spirit of good will and generosity, and especially, if you avail yourself of the first opportunity to show him some substantial act of kindness, he will give you full credit for sincerity, and will probably meet you with a corresponding spirit, and thus a real and permanent reconciliation will be secured. It is really one of the noblest attributes of a noble soul, to be able to render good

for evil—especially to confer great benefits upon one from whom great injuries have been received.

Joseph forgave his brethren in a way that was fitted to exert the happiest influence upon their tempers. He might indeed, as soon as they appeared before him in Egypt, and he recognized them as the brethren who had sold him as a slave—he might have revealed to them at once the astounding fact that he was their brother, and have given them free and immediate access to a brother's heart. But, though his first feelings might have prompted to this, it instantly occurred to him that those brethren had committed a great offence, not only against himself, but against their father, and against God: and that it was fitting that they should be made sensible of it, and should be brought to contemplate it with a truly repentant spirit. And with a view to secure this end, and not because he desired to see them even temporarily unhappy, he instituted that singular course of measures by which they were so severely tried, up to the time that he made himself known to them. Their being imprisoned as spies, Simeon being detained as an hostage, the affair of the silver cup, and that whole series of events, which

kept them so long in anxiety and distress, and sometimes even consternation, were designed—fraternally and mercifully designed, to make them hearty penitents in view of their misconduct, and to prepare them for the blessings which were yet in store for them. And the desired effect was produced—conscience was stirred up to do its office; and in the fearful punishment which they apprehended, as well as in the extremity to which they were actually brought, they saw the enormity of the crime of which they had been guilty. And in this respect also Joseph is an example for *you*. It is one important part of the duty you owe to the person who has injured you, to make him sensible, if possible, of the evil of his conduct, and lead him to cultivate such a temper that he shall at once be worthy of your forgiveness, and able rightly to appreciate it, and suitably to profit by it.

The considerations which urge you to the cultivation of a forgiving spirit, I shall only hint at in a single word. It is in itself one of the noblest exercises of a virtuous temper, and one of the greatest triumphs over a corrupt and grovelling selfishness. It blesses both him who forgives and

him who is forgiven, and operates like a charm to allay the withering strifes of society. It is one of the prescribed conditions on which we may hope for the forgiveness of our offences here, and our open acquittal at the judgment. It is the spirit which animated the Saviour of the world;—which manifested itself in his doctrines and precepts and example, and which breathed in all its fulness and vigour amidst the scenes of Calvary. Ponder each of these considerations till it shall have exerted its full influence upon you; and like Joseph, and like a greater than Joseph, ever exemplify the forgiving spirit.

LETTER XIV.

FILIAL REGARD.

I DESIGN, in this letter, to address you in respect to the feelings and conduct appropriate to the filial relation. It might seem as if nature herself had made such provision for the development of the filial

principle, that little need be said to give it the right direction, or secure its legitimate end; and yet the fact turns out to be, that there is scarcely a principle belonging to our constitution, that requires more vigilant attention, or more careful culture, than this. I fear that truth constrains to the acknowledgment that the period on which you have fallen, is distinguished above any preceding period in modern times, for the want of filial respect; and happy indeed shall I be, if, by holding up Joseph before you as a model, I shall succeed in reviving in your minds the ancient spirit of reverence towards parents, and of leading you to feel that, if you will be true to one of the noblest instincts of your nature, you must honour your father and your mother.

I had occasion to remark to you in the preceding letter that Joseph's forgiving spirit had impressed itself upon his whole history; and the same is true of his filial regard — it is so interwoven with all the important events of his life, that an attempt to separate it from them, would be nothing less than an attempt completely to falsify the narrative. Joseph was too young when his mother died, to know the strength of maternal

love or the value of maternal care; but towards his father, who lived till after the son had reached his maturity, he showed himself one of the most perfect models in the filial relation that history can furnish.

The earliest development of the filial principle that comes within our knowledge is affection: the very first exercises of feeling which the child discovers, that are in any degree independent of its physical nature — certainly the first feelings of an amiable character, may be read in the tenacity with which it clings to its mother, and in the smile into which a mother's love works its infantile features. And, doubtless, the feeling of affection towards both parents, has the precedence, in the order of nature, above any other. Joseph, from his earliest years, evidently manifested toward his father a devoted attachment; and probably the great strength of his filial affection was one circumstance that made him so much an object of parental partiality, and was finally the occasion of bringing upon him such severe trials. But it was in his later years that his affection had an opportunity to manifest itself in the most decided demonstrations. Notice the affectionate

inquiry which he made of his brethren concerning their father's health, while yet they had not begun to suspect that their father was also his. Notice the charge which he gave them to bring their father—the old man, down, that he might set eyes upon him. And after he had revealed to them the secret that he was Joseph, observe that the very first question which he asked them was, "Doth my father yet live?"—and forthwith he renews with still greater earnestness the charge which he had previously given—"Haste you, and go up to my father, and say unto him, thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me—tarry not." And above all, notice the account of the first meeting between him and his father in the land of Goshen, and see him dissolved in tears, hanging upon his father's neck; and say whether you can imagine a scene in which the very sublimity of filial affection should be more strikingly manifested. And then you remember what provision he made for his father's comfort;—how carefully and tenderly he watched over his old age; how he hastened to his dying bed to minister to his last wants and receive his final blessing;—how,

even after the patriarch had yielded up the ghost, the dutiful, affectionate son still "fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him;" and how, finally, after a public lamentation had been made for him, he obeyed his dying command in having him removed for burial to the spot which he had designated in the land of Canaan. You see that Joseph's affection for his father was far enough from being an inactive principle: it discovered itself in every act of obedience and kindness which his own ability permitted, or his father's necessities required.

Joseph, you perceive, treated his father with the greatest respect and reverence. And this was not a constrained feeling—it was the legitimate working of that strong filial affection, which was inwrought among the deepest sensibilities of his nature. But this is nothing more than is due to the parental relation. You are to reverence your parents as those whom Providence has constituted your superiors and guardians: and you are to give expression to this spirit by every appropriate means. Especially, you should beware that you do not pervert the affectionate familiarity to which they may admit you, to

purposes of disrespect: you should not too hastily call in question their opinions, and if you have occasion to dissent from them, should do it in a spirit of becoming modesty: you should not show yourself disposed to monopolize or direct the conversation in which they are taking a part, but should rather give place to them, and remember that, on such occasions especially, one important part of your duty is to listen—in short, you should let it appear, on every occasion, both in publick and private, that you cherish toward them a profound respect, and that you are ready to defer to them in every thing that shall not interfere with the sober convictions of your judgment and conscience.

I am aware that there are cases to which these remarks, in all their extent, cannot apply; for, unhappily, there are some children who have parents whose characters are such as to forbid and repel even filial respect. The child who sees his father fall down drunk, and hears him deal out vulgarity and blasphemy, and dreads his return home, lest it should be the harbinger of a night of terror and weeping to his mother, cannot, ought not, to reverence that father, as if

he were a pattern of the domestick virtues. Still, however, even in this case, there is something due to the parental relation. It is, to say the least, exceedingly offensive to all good taste, and I may add, contrary to the dictates of nature, for a child in these circumstances to seem willing, as is sometimes the case, to expose a father's vices. You may not indeed be forbidden in all circumstances to speak of them—*that* may sometimes be necessary; but let it always be in a manner that shall show that you have not forgotten that the offender is your father, and that you earnestly desire to render him a full share of filial respect. There may be cases in which it is proper for you, even to address him directly in regard to his evil doings, and to put forth a vigorous effort to recover him to virtue and usefulness. But this is perhaps the most delicate office which a child ever has to perform; for, in this case, he seems to change places with the father; and however well intended and well performed may be the duty which he takes upon himself, there is always danger that it will be met with irritation and disgust. If you are ever providentially called to the discharge of this painful duty towards a

parent, be careful that you select the most favourable time—a time when his mind is most free from unnatural excitement and most open to conviction; and if you can select some moment when he is suffering immediately the effect of his vices, or when some calamitous dispensation hath overtaken him, *that* will probably be the most favoured moment of all. And let there be every thing in your manner to evince that you approach the duty with the utmost reluctance and pain, and that it is because you love your father with strong affection that you cannot look upon his ruin and remain silent. Let what you say be considerately and discreetly weighed, before you say it; and, in ordinary cases, if you will secure the best impression, better not have the conversation a very protracted one. What you must rely upon chiefly, under the blessing of Heaven, is the spirit of filial affection coming out in such a way as to keep down resentment, to disarm parental authority, and to open a way to the heart for a solemn, affectionate, earnest expostulation.

But you are to *obey* your parents as well as reverence them—indeed you cannot reverence

them as you ought, but that obedience is secured as a matter of course. Whatever command Joseph received from his father, he obeyed cordially and promptly. If his father directed him, when a child, to go and visit his brethren who were keeping their flocks, he went without offering a single objection. If his father directed him, when governour of Egypt, to convey his mortal remains back to the land of Canaan for burial, here again there was no time lost in obeying this command. And we have no reason to believe that his father ever addressed to him either a command or a request, but it was complied with at the very earliest moment possible. What a beautiful exemplification was this of the filial spirit!

My young friend "go thou and do likewise." But remember that you do not come up fully to the spirit of the duty that is here required of you, merely by doing sooner or later, and in some way or other, the external act, which parental authority may enjoin. You must not only obey, but you must obey promptly. Suppose the service required of you be not exactly that which is most in accordance with your taste, or inclination, or

even judgment — I do not say that you are not at liberty, in such a case, respectfully to state your opinion, or offer a suggestion, but it ill becomes you to take the attitude of an objector or a caviller, and virtually tell your father that you must at least have an argument with him, before you shall do the thing which he requires. As a general rule, the intimation of a parent's desire should be enough to determine your conduct; and none but a parent who has had experience, can know how great is the difference between that obedience which is thus promptly and cordially rendered, and that which waits for a repetition of the parental mandate, and which after all is of a constrained and stinted character.

You will anticipate me when I say that, as vicious qualities in parents are not to be reverenced, so neither are their commands to do evil, to be obeyed. But here it often becomes an exceedingly delicate question how far you may go in what may seem doubtful compliances, rather than take the attitude of opposition to parental authority. In cases of this kind, you must judge by the best lights that you can command; and it will generally be discreet in you to refer such

questions to some maturer wisdom and experience than your own. But when the thing that is required of you is manifestly and palpably wrong, —no matter by what considerations it may be urged,—you need not even ask yourself the question whether you shall obey, for God has already settled that question at your hands. You must not even connive at evil, though the consequence should be that you are cut off from the paternal inheritance, or turned out of the paternal dwelling. Such extreme cases, however, rarely occur ; and even when a parent thus perverts his authority by requiring at the hands of his child what cannot be rendered in consistency with a good conscience, the child will, very often at least, by respectfully stating his convictions and remonstrating against the thing required of him, relieve himself from the alternative of either violating his conscience or disobeying his father.

I will only add that the filial spirit properly brought into exercise, will, if necessary, and if possible, provide for the comfort of parents in the decline of life. It was worth all that Joseph had suffered from the persecution of his brethren, and even being exiled so long from his beloved

father, to be able to act the father towards *him* in his latter years: indeed, for the pleasure of that one meeting—the welcome, the embrace, the paternal benediction, what generous minded son would not stand ready to make any sacrifice? Possibly *your* parents may have been unfortunate in life; and, after having supplied your early wants, and educated you to some useful pursuit, they may have themselves become poor; and now, as old age is advancing upon them, they may be without the means of procuring even the comforts of life. If you have a spark of filial sensibility, you will never see them suffer—you will not oblige them even to ask your aid—your generous interposition will at least be as quick as their own thoughts; and you will not rest till their wants are provided for, even though your own lot may not rise above an humble mediocrity. But, admitting that they stand in no need of pecuniary aid, there are other things besides money that can minister to the comfort of old age. Your filial attentions—your frequent visits, if you are separated from them—your delicate expressions of respect and veneration, will all operate as a cordial to their spirits; and these

will be more precious to them than any comforts that opulence could bring within their reach. Especially if they are sick, you should hasten, with filial tenderness, to their bed side; and let them see that you are vigilant in respect to every thing that can promote their comfort; and even, when they come to be in the twilight of life, let them reflect, if it may be so, that their beloved children are among the last objects of their mortal vision. I can hardly forbear envying that son who has at once the disposition and the opportunity of smoothing the path of his aged parents to the grave.

I had intended to say something in the conclusion of this letter, to urge to the cultivation of this spirit; but it so obviously appeals to whatever is generous and noble in human nature, that I am willing to leave the whole subject with you without another word. I will, however, just add, that the absence of this spirit in a young man marks him as an object at once to be pitied and to be avoided; and that its existence is regarded, and justly regarded, as one of the best pledges of a virtuous and useful character.

LETTER XV.

DEPENDANCE ON GOD.

Every thing that has been said in the preceding letters has taken for granted that Joseph was a truly religious man. You have seen how his most ordinary actions were evidently dictated by a regard to principle and conscience; how sincerity and benevolence breathed in all his social intercourse, and stern integrity marked every step of his course as a man of business. But I design, in the present letter, to bring him before you more immediately in the relations which he sustained to God; or rather to show you how the sentiment of dependance on God operated as the controlling principle of his life. I might point to various facts in his history — such as his recognition of divine aid in his interpretation of the dreams, or rather his referring the whole matter to the direct agency of Heaven, — his commending his brethren to the mercy of

Almighty God, when he sent them back to his father, and other similar circumstances; but it is enough to say that this attribute of his character manifests itself, directly or indirectly, at every point of his history. He evidently acted, habitually, under a deep impression of an all-seeing, all-controlling God. And this same spirit I would urge you to cultivate, as the leading element of true piety — as the germ of Christian character.

By the spirit of dependance, I mean that spirit which recognizes your own weakness, and which relies, in a suitable manner, on help from on high. It has reference both to your temporal and spiritual needs. I hardly need say that its appropriate expression is prayer.

In every thing that relates to the present life you are to cherish a due sense of dependance on God. Trivial as the interests of this life may seem, compared with those of another, it still has its importance; and when considered in its relation to a future life, an importance that outruns all calculation. In respect to these interests — no matter whether they be the higher or the lower interests of life, — infinite power, wisdom, goodness, are to be acknowledged. For instance, you

are to watch carefully the indications of Providence, and to seek the higher aids of God's Spirit, in regard to the choice of your profession or occupation for life; for, if you happen to mistake here, and make a choice which your talents and circumstances do not justify, you may bring upon yourself calamities from which no subsequent effort will be able to deliver you. You are to trust in God, not only for guidance in respect to the field which you are to occupy, but for the ability to occupy it with success, and for a blessing to crown your labours. You are liable sometimes to be placed in circumstances of difficulty and embarrassment — to see your worldly prospects clouded, and your path apparently hedged up — here again, you are to direct your eye upward; — you are to seek relief from the power that rules the world. In a word, you are to trust God for every needed temporal blessing — you are to trust his wisdom to decide what blessings are best for you, and his power and goodness, to bestow them.

But there is a nobler life than this — there is an inward spiritual life which developes itself in holy exercises and actions: there is a future immortal life, that is to be the theatre of the endless growth

and glory of the spirit, and for which the present is chiefly important as constituting the scene of preparation. And in all that respects these nobler forms of existence and action, your dependance on God is specially to be acknowledged. First of all, you are to cast yourself upon him as an offending creature. Deeply sensible of your unworthiness, you are to rely on his mercy, through the mediation of Christ, for the pardon of your sins, and his grace for the cleansing and renovation of your soul. In all your spiritual difficulties, you are to look to him for direction; in all your temptations, for succour; in all your sorrows, for comfort; in all your weakness, for strength. Even though you may have been the subject of a true renovation, you will probably often find yourself at a distance from God, and perhaps your progress in the Christian life may be so slow and equivocal, that you may be ready to doubt whether what you called Christian experience was not gross delusion. In all these circumstances, what you have to do is to bring to your aid, by living faith, the resources of boundless grace. Thus making God your refuge and strength, you will be enabled to forget the things

that are behind, and press forward; and your path will shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

The great importance of cultivating this principle of dependance on God, will be obvious from two considerations. It is itself the primary element of religious character, and it is that which, in its legitimate operation, gathers around it some other of the loveliest graces and virtues of the Christian.

A moment's reflection will show you that it precedes, in the order of nature, all the other graces. Indeed, if it may not be said to precede the formation of Christian character, it is at least associated with the very earliest exercises of true piety; for it is not till the soul feels its absolute dependance on God for salvation, that it is brought to yield itself up to him in acts of repentance and faith. Without this spirit, no one ever offers up acceptable prayer: the publican could not have exclaimed with sincerity — "God be merciful to me a sinner!" — if he had not felt that he was entirely dependant on God for the blessing that he supplicated. Remember then, if you have not had such views of your own weakness and guilt and unworthiness, as

to make you deeply realize that salvation, if it comes to you at all, must come from God,—you have never been the subject of a genuine conversion—you have never offered to God acceptable homage.

But you are to view this spirit also in its relation to other Christian qualities, particularly humility, submission, gratitude, and activity.

What is there that can make you humble, if it be not a sense of your dependance on God? If you feel that you are indebted entirely to your own industry or skill for your temporal blessings, and that you may safely trust to your own merit for all the spiritual blessings that you need, the consequence will necessarily be that you will be full of pride and self confidence;—you will never come to take lessons from the cross;—you will scorn the humbling provision—the only provision which the gospel makes—for your salvation. But if, on the other hand, you feel that you are at best short-sighted and impotent—that you are liable to be deceived where you are most sure of being right, and liable to fail where you are most confident of success; if you are deeply sensible that you owe a debt to divine

justice that you can never pay, and that, if you are finally saved, it must be by a special divine and gracious interposition; if, in short, you feel that you are a debtor to God's abounding mercy for every thing temporal and every thing spiritual —for all that you enjoy and all that you hope for,—then I ask, how you can avoid being humble? If it is God who makes you to differ from others whose lot is less favoured—if God is the bountiful bestower, and you the unworthy recipient, and you sensibly feel this, you are humble as a matter of course—you walk humbly with God—you walk humbly before the world. And I need not explain to you the difference between that proud spirit which goeth before a fall, and that humble spirit which is the signal for being exalted.

So also a suitable dependance on God is a security for submission to the divine will. If you trust to your own wisdom, or that of your fellow creatures, to order your lot, scorning the idea that you stand in need of any superhuman guidance, you will be ill prepared for disappointment; and when it comes, you will indulge in unavailing regrets, and equally unavailing reproaches. You

will blame the eye that was so blind, or the hand that was so feeble, or the heart that was so base, as to frustrate your favourite purposes; or possibly you may fall upon yourself in bitter accusations for having negligently betrayed your own interests. But, if you cast all your cares upon God, and confide all your interests to his providence and grace, recognizing his hand not only in the blessings that cheer you but in the sorrows that make your heart desolate,—then you will be prepared for scenes of trial—prepared to submit to them without repining, because *that* wisdom in which you are accustomed to exercise an implicit confidence has ordained them. It was but the other day that I received a letter from a young female, informing me that her father, who has long been known as one of the greatest and best men of the age, had been suddenly—in the twinkling of an eye—stricken down by death. It was the greatest affliction that she could have experienced; for not only was she hereby deprived of one of the best of fathers, but was now, for the first time, thrown upon her own resources in respect to the general direction of the interests of her family. But, in the days of

prosperity, she had been accustomed to cultivate a constant feeling of trust in God; and every sentence in her sad letter showed that, now that the day of adversity had come, she was not taken by surprize—that her spirit had already been disciplined for the trial, and that she was reposing in humble submission in the perfect wisdom and goodness of her Heavenly Father. You too must expect days of trial; and, as you would desire to be calm when the storm rages, to be resigned when earthly comforts fly away, let me exhort you to an habitual feeling of dependance on God.

Gratitude too is another of the graces that cluster about this primary form of religious feeling. It must be so; for if you feel that you depend on God for every thing—on his providence for protection—on his spirit for sanctification, you also recognize his hand in these blessings when they are actually bestowed; and what else is thinking of him in this way as your Benefactor, but being grateful for his goodness? Moreover, how natural that, as you look forward in the spirit of dependance to the future, you should connect with your anticipations a review of the past; that, with the supplications which this spirit prompts

for the blessings that you need, thanksgivings should also mingle for the mercies which you have received. Only take care that you feel sufficiently your dependance on God, and you may leave the spirit of gratitude to take care of itself — the one can not thrive but the other will thrive with it.

I will only add that this temper which I have been recommending, is really the spirit of all true Christian activity. I well know that the doctrine of dependance is often perverted to purposes of negligence and sloth. The sinner perverts it to the neglect of his salvation — for he reasons thus with himself — "If I depend entirely for salvation on God's grace, then I have nothing to do but to wait till that grace is communicated; and if it never comes, and I am lost in consequence, *who* shall say that I am my own destroyer?" The professed Christian often perverts it to the neglect of the most obvious duties of the religious life; "for," says he, "if God's work is to be carried forward in the world by his own agency, — if the church cannot be revived except by his quickening influence, — if the heathen cannot be saved unless his arm is revealed for their deliverance, then what

have I to do, but sit still till God does his own work, and then give him the glory?" Need I say that this is the most egregious sophistry, or rather the most miserable trifling? God has made you a moral agent; and he requires you to act according to the laws of your moral nature; and it is only as you obey this requisition, that you have a right to expect his blessing. He will give you your food and raiment, but you must work for it. He will give you grace to help in every time of need: but he will communicate it to you through the medium of your own activity. And if you do not comply with the terms on which the blessing is offered, blame not God — blame only yourself — if it be withheld.

But I have said that this doctrine of dependance, when viewed aright, instead of being an encouragement to sloth, is a stimulant to effort. For it carries you out of your own feebleness, and brings you into communion with everlasting strength. If you were required to discharge the duties of the spiritual life especially, in reliance on your own resources alone, you might well yield to despondency, and attempt nothing; for, if you viewed the matter aright, you could not but feel

that, in relation to such duties, your own strength is weakness. But, since you are privileged to bring to yourself by faith and prayer a portion of that energy which made the world—since, when you are oppressed with a sense of your weakness, you can hang on that arm on which the whole creation hangs, you have nothing to fear—you may go forward with confidence and alacrity; and not a believing and well directed effort that you put forth will ultimately miss its object. And let me say, this accords with individual experience. The most efficient labourers in the cause of truth and righteousness have always been those who have believed the doctrine of dependance without perverting it; who have laboured as diligently as if all depended on themselves; who have depended as absolutely as if their labours were in no way requisite to the blessing.

PART III.

REWARDS THAT CROWN A VIRTUOUS COURSE.

LETTER XVI.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH SAFETY.

If I have accomplished the end which I proposed in the preceding letters, I have given you some idea of the dangers which you are to meet, and of the spirit in which you are to meet them. I have shown you the amiable and exemplary Joseph cast into a furnace of temptation and affliction, and coming out of it like gold seven times purified; and have endeavoured to hold him up to you, not only as an illustration of the difficulties and trials which you may expect, but as an example of

the virtues and graces at which you are to aim. It only remains that, in the letters which follow, I should ask you to contemplate the bright rewards with which his course was crowned, as exemplifying, in some degree, the rewards which every young man has a right to look for, who walks in his steps.

In a world of danger like this, it is much to say that an individual is safe; notwithstanding the idea which this involves is rather negative than positive. I will endeavour to show you how virtue ensures safety—safety both in respect to temporal and spiritual evils.

I do not undertake to say that virtue will be an absolute security against all temporal evils;—for we know that this is contradicted by experience. Nor do I mean to intimate that the virtuous man will always escape injury from his fellow man;—for this idea is refuted by the experience of Joseph himself; and we all know that we are to look for the history of some of the best men that the world has seen, in the records of martyrdom. The truth which Joseph's history illustrates, and to which I wish now to direct your attention, is, that the good man is safe, even when dangers seem to threaten

—safe in any circumstances in which he can be placed.

If you look into the world, you will find that a large portion of the evils which individuals suffer from their fellow men, are not altogether unprovoked—they have their origin in some previous neglect or positive wrong, of which they have themselves been guilty. You may indeed have received a much greater wrong than you have inflicted; but if you had inflicted none at all, neither, perhaps, would you have received any. Now, against this whole class of evils virtue secures you, by leading you to forbear all provocation. And when an unprovoked injury has been inflicted, virtue may not improbably prevent the repetition of it, by leading you to meet the offender in the spirit of a generous conciliation. Let a man who has been injured by another, show himself, not indeed insensible to the injury or lacking in self respect, but, with a high magnanimous bearing, ready to return good for evil; and if he is not henceforth secure against all injury from the same source, it is evidence that he has fallen into the hands of a fiend and not of a man.

Besides, there is something in the dignity with

which virtue surrounds its possessor, to repel every improper freedom—much more every injurious assault. There are indeed some who cannot be restrained even by this—some who are so debased and malignant, that the loftier the virtue, the more ready they are to insult and tarnish; but, in most cases, even malignity itself will quail before the majesty of exalted principle.

Moreover, if such an individual be unjustly assailed, there are many around who are ready to come to his aid. His excellent character, as in the case of Joseph, secures to him excellent friends; and they are ever at hand to throw themselves as a shield between him and any meditated harm of which they may be apprized. Even those with whom he may have had no particular intimacy, if they see that he is likely to suffer, will throng about him for his defence; and perhaps, in the end, he may have no occasion personally to regret that the injury was attempted, as the effect of it has been only to show him how much strength he has, in the good will of the community at large, as well as in the attachment of his personal friends.

But suppose the very worst that can happen to a

good man—suppose that, like some of our modern missionaries, he be surrounded with those who are not only thirsting for his blood but literally hungering for his flesh, and he sees the fearful preparation going forward for taking his life in the most barbarous manner—it is possible that God may interpose, even then, for his deliverance. He who would not suffer Joseph to be left in the pit to die, nor to remain in prison for a crime of which he was not guilty—He who would not suffer the lions to harm Daniel, when he was thrown among them, nor the furnace to burn the young men when they were cast into it—He may find means—and that without resorting to a miraculous agency—for effecting the deliverance of an individual, even in the circumstances which I have supposed. Be it, however, that no such signal interposition occurs, and that he who has fallen into the hands of cannibals, actually falls a victim to their barbarity—is there any safety here? Yes, safety in the best sense—the immortal spirit is safe—the faggots that set the body on fire, or the sharp instrument that pierces the seat of life, only liberates the great imprisoned soul, so that it can fly off to its glorious home.

The martyr, with his head upon the block, is safe. Lyman and Munson and Williams were safe, when they felt that the next moment they were to be the subjects of a violent and horrible death.

I have attempted to show you, in some preceding letters, that those evils which affect your earthly condition merely, are not the evils from which you have most to fear, and, in relation to which chiefly, safety is to be regarded as a blessing. There are spiritual evils—evils that have their seat in the soul, and, if not removed, must affect its permanent well-being—nay, entail upon it an everlasting death. Let me say, virtue —I here and all along use the word in the higher and evangelical sense, as including whatever is essential to religious character—virtue is an effectual security against these greatest of evils.

Consider its influence in regard to the temptations by which you are surrounded. If you habitually manifest the spirit of true religion—especially if you are a shining example of it—there is a large class of temptations which you will, by this means, keep at a distance from you

—I refer particularly to the direct attempts of evil companions to draw you into sin. It is true that men of corrupt principles and profligate lives are always glad enough to seduce the young Christian into forbidden paths; and where they can bring such an one to make shipwreck of his religious character, they never fail to chronicle it as a victory. But those on whom they are most likely to try their wiles, because most likely to succeed, are persons who have already betrayed to them some symptoms of backsliding—who have furnished them evidence that their principles are more easy and accommodating than those of professed christians generally. Persons of this description—observe it where you will—are courted by the gay, the worldly, and sometimes even the profligate; and alas! the result too often shows that the judgment which was formed respecting their susceptibility to temptation was but too correct. Whereas, on the other hand, let an individual stand forth the consistent, decided Christian, inquiring only what he *ought* to do in order to decide what he *shall* do,—and he will not be regarded as a good subject for the wiles of the wicked to operate upon;—and there

will be so little confidence of success in respect to him, that the effort to tempt and destroy will be likely to take some different direction. The men who make it their business to ruin others, are generally wary enough in selecting those whom they intend to make their victims; and they must either be excessively presuming, or greatly lacking in discernment, to fasten upon those who are models of integrity and virtue.

But we will suppose that a person of this high moral and religious character actually is assailed by the enemies of virtue—or, if you please, we will view him as brought in contact with the various temptations incident to our present condition, and growing out of the circumstances in which we are placed—temptations which even the most vigilant care and the most seraphic piety cannot always avert—his advantage now is, that he is armed for a conflict with the tempter. Joseph could not avoid the criminal solicitations of Potiphar's wife; but his eminent goodness made him proof against them. *You* cannot avoid temptations from the various objects with which you are conversant; the various pursuits to which you are devoted. Pleasure, honour, wealth,

may come and court your affections, and try to draw your heart away from your higher interests; but, if you have Joseph's spirit, you will meet them all with a resolute resistance; and every conflict that occurs in your experience, will be the signal for a fresh victory. You will not do this in your own strength; but God's gracious Spirit will come to your aid, and work in you and by you, to defeat the powers of evil.

It is not merely from enemies without, however, that your best interests are in jeopardy—you have within you existing in connection with a partially sanctified nature, a formidable host of corruptions; and these continue to operate with more or less vigour to the close of life. But even these enemies shall not ultimately harm you. They may temporarily assert their power, and you may be ready sometimes to imagine that they will bring you into complete captivity. But here again, if you can rely on the testimony of God, you may feel sure that you will come off more than conqueror. The new principle in your soul will live in spite of them; and every inward conflict in which you are engaged, will render it

more vigorous in its operations. Yes, I repeat, you are safe; because you have the promise of God — the everlasting arm, to sustain you.

Say then, my young friends, whether there be not much implied in that safety which crowns a virtuous course. To be safe amidst temporal dangers and amidst spiritual dangers, from enemies without and from enemies within, in all actual and in all possible circumstances — surely you cannot estimate such a privilege too highly. The irreligious man is safe never, — not even when no cloud lowers in the sky, and every thing seems to speak of promise and hope: the good man is safe always, — though a death-like gloom may seem to have gathered over his horizon, and the last of his earthly joys may be upon the wing. Virtue, thou art indeed rich in thy rewards — but as yet we have only seen the beginning.

LETTER XVII.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH PEACE.

It is a great blessing to live in peace with our fellow men; to be able to reflect, either that we have no enemies in the world, or that, if we have them, it is not our own fault. Peace in the domestic circle — peace in the neighbourhood — peace in the more extended community, — while it is in itself a rich blessing, is the source of many other blessings which enter largely into the scene of human enjoyment. The universal prevalence of peace in the world is predicted in scripture as one of the brightest glories of Messiah's reign.

But the peace of which I propose to treat in the present letter, differs from this chiefly as a cause differs from an effect. It is the inward peace of the soul — that serene and yet fearless state of mind, which philosophy indeed may counterfeit, but which Christianity alone can really produce. Let this spirit prevail through

an entire community, and the members of that community will be at peace with each other, furnishing a beautiful resemblance to the harmony of Heaven. Let it reign in the breast of a solitary individual, and though there may be the wildest tempest raging around him, it will never penetrate the sanctuary of his own bosom.

How beautifully is this inward peace exemplified in the history which I have laid before you! We have seen that Joseph was sometimes placed in circumstances of peculiar trial: he was cruelly exiled from the paternal home; he was sold as a slave; he was imprisoned as a felon; and yet there is not an intimation in the history, that he manifested the semblance of a complaining spirit in any of the trying situations in which he was placed; and the only instance in which we hear of his making an effort, or saying a word, with a view to bring about any melioration of his condition, was that in which he hinted to the king's butler, whose dream he had interpreted, that, after he (the butler) should be released from prison, a good word spoken to the king in *his* behalf, would be very acceptable. But there was no evidence that Joseph was ruffled by the ingratitude of his

fellow prisoner in not heeding his request; nor, indeed, by any other of the adverse circumstances which occurred to him. He seems always to have maintained a delightful equanimity of temper, — no matter what burdens may have oppressed, or what dangers may have threatened; and this was at once one of the exercises and the rewards of his exemplary virtue.

Let me call your attention, for a little, to the manner in which virtue — religion — operates to produce this inward peace. I hardly need say that this is a point of great importance; for not only is this peace an important element in our earthly happiness, but it is that emphatically which *constitutes* earthly happiness. Without it, all the good which the world has to bestow, will leave a man miserable: with it, all the evil which the world can inflict, cannot render him so. In the strong language of scripture, it is a "peace that passeth understanding."

Let me say then, that virtue operates to secure this richest of all blessings, first of all, by its effect upon the conscience. Man, as a sinner, is alienated from God, his righteous lawgiver and final judge; and conscience is the faculty that

gives him notice of this alienation, and forces upon him the inquiry how he shall be able to stand in the judgment. He may indeed be so sunk in stupidity, that he may sin for a time, and even with a high hand, without remorse; but let him awake to the actual reality of his condition, and then begins the controversy between his inclinations on the one hand, and his conscience on the other. His sinful propensities prompt to evil—his conscience points to a future reckoning; and though, so long as he retains his character as an habitual sinner, his evil propensities prevail, yet, so long as his conscience remains in any degree awake, it will at least occasion an inward disquietude, if it does not haunt him with absolute horror. Now, it is the province of true virtue to bring these different faculties of our nature into harmony—to give the inclinations a right direction, and to draw from conscience an approving testimony. But the difficulty lies yet deeper, and reaches farther back; for even the renovating work of the Holy Spirit leaves man in only a partially sanctified state—he is still, in a degree, the servant of sin; and conscience notifies him that every sin of which he is guilty deserves punish-

ment — notifies him, moreover, that he can do nothing to atone for the sins that are past. But here comes in the life giving assurance, that there is redemption from sin through the blood of Christ. Faith in Christ applies this blood to the conscience, thus furnishing it with an answer toward God; and the consequence is, that the clamours of guilt are hushed, and the joy which the confidence of a free forgiveness inspires, diffuses itself through the soul. Many of you, I trust, who will read these pages, have a knowledge on this subject, which experience alone can impart. You have felt — still feel — what no language can render intelligible to a mind that is a stranger to the exercises of living faith: and as for those who have had no such experience, they have not only the testimony of multitudes that is worthy of all acceptation, but they may form some conception of the joy of forgiveness by what they themselves sometimes suffer from the terrours of remorse. If you cannot fully appreciate the blessing of a pacified conscience through the blood of Christ, so far as respects its positive character, you surely have had experience enough

of an opposite kind, to realize that it is no light thing to gain a deliverance from a sense of guilt.

But, while virtue produces inward peace, by thus reversing the testimony of conscience, it contributes to the same result also, by rooting out from the soul those evil affections and desires which perpetually minister to its disquietude. Look at the revengeful man. He has received, or supposes he has received, some injury; and he imagines that his honour is tarnished; and he cannot rest till he has made provision to brighten it up by some revengeful act—perhaps by attacking his adversary in the street—perhaps by calling him into the field, in the hope of shedding his blood. Rely on it, there is, in all these cases, not only mental excitement but mental agony; the spirit which can prompt to such an act or such a project, is worthy of a fiend; and it cannot have possession of a human bosom without being a tormentor. And even, where, from considerations of timidity or of policy, there may be no external demonstration of the revengeful spirit,—though it may never be felt in any offensive act, nor heard even in a whisper, yet it will be nothing better in the soul

than an imprisoned fury; or, if you please, a serpent holding the whole inner man continually in his deadly coils. Look, next, at the covetous man, who is forever grasping for great possessions; at the envious man, who cannot be happy while he sees others more favoured than himself; at the complaining man, who can never be satisfied with his own lot; at the sensualist, whose appetites are always in a feverish excitement, and whether gratified or ungratified, leave him with no rest to his spirit; and, in each of these cases, if you could know the secret history of the soul, you would know that there is an amount of unhappiness, of which the outer man gives but little indication. To all these evils, virtue, in proportion as she prevails, furnishes an effectual antidote; and how much such an antidote is worth, they best can judge, who have felt the corroding influence of these evil tempers, and have afterwards had them cured by those powerful influences from on high which religion supplies.

It is not, however, the whole triumph of virtue that she eradicates bad dispositions—she brings goods ones in their place. She not only drives out

from the bosom the spirit of revenge, but she introduces the spirit of forgiveness and benevolence. She not only casts out the spirit of envy and repining, but she brings in generosity and contentment. She not only cures the vices of the sensualist, but, by bringing his appetites into a healthful subjection to his reason, she ministers to his direct and innocent enjoyment. Indeed, all the various emotions which virtue awakens, are in their nature pleasurable. Let her have the entire dominion of the soul, and you have the model of a Heaven upon earth.

I may say too, that virtue opens yet another source of enjoyment, in the sweet hopes and anticipations which she inspires. It is not in man, constituted as he is, to be always absorbed with the present — the mind will run forward, to see what the future may have treasured up for it; and no small part of its happiness or misery is found in the result of these excursions into futurity. The wicked man, if he exercises his faculties on this subject in a rational manner, will find nothing to minister to his joy — much, on the contrary, to fill him with anxiety and alarm. But the truly good man gathers from his anticipations of the

future some of his most substantial and elevated enjoyment. What may await him in this world, he knows not—for aught that he can tell, his whole future life may be a scene of painful vicissitude; but there is another thought that more than sustains him under this—viz. that God's paternal care and faithfulness are pledged to him in all circumstances, and that nothing can occur, so adverse to his present comfort, but that it will serve to increase his future joy. And then, when he looks beyond this momentary existence, and throws his thoughts along the eternal future, here there rise to his view scenes of light and glory, which the most glowing imagination cannot fully overtake. Heaven, free from every thing that can awaken sorrow—Heaven, full of every thing that can entrance the spirit, opens upon the eye of faith; and while he is employed in analyzing the eternal weight of glory, his mind is quickened into a still higher exultation by the thought that this is his own glorious inheritance. What matters it how much of trouble there may be in my path through the world, if I have the assurance that that path shall open into a world whose glories will cast into the shade even the

brightest forms of life and beauty that my imagination hath ever conceived.

I must not omit to add that the good man is at peace, inasmuch as he enjoys the special presence and favour of God. He has a right to expect this at all times, provided he lives in the faithful discharge of duty; but especially in those dark seasons of life, when earthly comforts fail, and he has the deepest sense of the poverty of the world. Above all, has he a right to expect it, when the earthly tabernacle totters, and the grave is opening beneath his feet. Believe me, the Lord our Shepherd does not forget his people, when they walk through the dark valley. As truly as they are there, He is there also, with his rod and his staff. Oh, is not this a glorious reward of a virtuous life? Is it not more than a compensation for all the toils and struggles which it may have occasioned, that it should render the last struggle easy to be borne, inasmuch as it is endured within sight of the world of glory — within hearing of the songs of seraphs?

LETTER XVIII.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH RICHES.

You may perhaps think it a somewhat violent transition, to pass from a consideration of that inward peace which is so immediately identified with the happiness of the good man, and which is the germ of that more expanded and elevated enjoyment that he anticipates in Heaven, to a subject that seems so earthly and grovelling as that of riches. You may be ready to ask whether I have forgotten that riches are alike uncertain and unsatisfying; that, while they often take to themselves wings and fly away, they are inadequate, while they are possessed, to meet the soul's noblest desires — nay, that they drown multitudes in destruction and perdition. No, I have not forgotten this, or any part of it; and yet I am prepared to maintain that riches may, in themselves, justly be considered a blessing; for it is the province of virtue to transmute the

earthly into the heavenly—the perishable into the imperishable. Nay further, I am ready also to vindicate the joining together in the same category the wealth that palls and perishes and the peace that satisfies and endures; for wealth has only to be used for the purposes for which it was intended, to become an auxiliary to that inward quietude which constitutes the soul's richest possession. In one point of view, you cannot say too much derogatory of riches—in another, you are in little danger of over-rating their value. Considered as the supreme portion of the soul, they are stamped with insignificance and worthlessness; but, considered as a means of doing good and thus securing treasure in Heaven, they possess a value which outruns all human powers of calculation.

You have already seen that Joseph, in the course of events, became the possessor of great riches. And how did he obtain them? Not surely by dishonest or even doubtful speculations, nor by any questionable means which, for his own credit's sake, he would have chosen not have divulged; but simply by fulfilling with fidelity the duties belonging to the various stations in

which Providence placed him. There is not the shadow of evidence from the history, that he was inordinately fond of riches, or that he yielded to any of the temptations which riches bring with them, or even that he ever made any special effort to obtain them; but it was the ordinance of Heaven that, without his own seeking, he should have the control of great wealth. That it was really a great blessing to him, because he used it in such a manner as to be a blessing to others, there can be no doubt.

Wealth is altogether a relative term; as we denominate a man rich or poor, according to the standard by which he is judged. We, however, ordinarily consider a man rich, who has considerable means at his command above what he needs for the support of himself and his family. If an individual has an income that barely supports him, and *that* with rigid economy, the utmost we say of him is, that he is in a state of respectable mediocrity; but, if his income be so great that the reasonable expenses of himself and those who are immediately dependant upon him, consume but an inconsiderable part of it, then, by common consent, he is regarded a rich man.

It has sometimes been questioned whether wealth is a legitimate object of human pursuit; but, under certain limitations, I marvel that any one should ever doubt that it is so. As a means of nourishing extravagance, of gratifying pride, or of ruining children, no sober man would defend the pursuit of it; but, as a means of ministering to the wants of others, of advancing the great interests of mankind, and thus securing the blessing that rests upon the charitable, it may be pursued even diligently and earnestly, and neither reason nor religion will have any thing to say but in the way of approval. It is the spirit with which, and the end for which, it is pursued, that justify — I may say, sanctify the pursuit.

Having thus vindicated wealth from the charge of worthlessness, and the proper pursuit of it from the suspicion of criminality or unreasonableness, let me now attempt to show you that the practice of virtue is favourable to acquiring and retaining this world's goods. When I speak of retaining them, of course I do not refer to their being kept in the hand of a miser, but to their being preserved from a premature and calamitous dispersion.

Wealth is ordinarily the fruit of labour, either

of body or mind, or both; for successful labour, health is an essential requisite; virtue is friendly to health, and therefore is favourable to the attainment of riches. Do you ask how virtue promotes health? It promotes it by preventing that numerous tribe of diseases consequent on sensuality, which benumb the physical faculties, becloud the intellect, and brutalize the whole man. And even, when sensual indulgences are kept within what may be called a moderate limit, so that the individual shall not be marked for excess, still their effect is gradually to impair the energies of the system, as well as to render it unfit for immediate exertion. It promotes it still farther, by keeping the mind free, in a great measure, from agitating and corroding passions. Let an individual be subjected habitually to the goadings of a guilty conscience; let him accustom himself to violent ebullitions of anger without any attempt at self control; let him meet some mortification at every step by reason of his unsubdued pride; let the sight of a condition more eligible than his own be a signal for the workings of a hateful envy; and you may rest assured there is a process, however imperceptible, going forward, to

impair, if not ultimately destroy, his physical energies. God has constituted the different parts of our nature with such a dependance on each other, that, under the influence of the same causes, they are found to rejoice or to suffer together; and especially is it true that a wound which has its seat in the moral, extends, in a degree at least, both to the intellectual and the physical. Whereas, on the other hand, let the moral faculties receive that direction which virtue secures to them; let the conscience bear witness for good, and let the passions occupy their proper place as servants, not as masters, in the soul, and you may rely on it that much has been gained towards securing an unclouded, vigorous mind, and a healthful body. I do not undertake to say that every good man is, of course, a man of active intellect, or of robust bodily health; and, on the other hand, I am well aware that some monsters in vice have possessed and retained, not only gigantic powers of mind, but uninterrupted health of body, through a long life. But these latter cases especially, are evidently exceptions to a general rule; and are to be accounted for, sometimes from some peculiarity of original constitution, and sometimes from the

overpowering influence of circumstances. The ordinary course of human experience fully confirms my position, that a well balanced state of the affections and passions, which it is the appropriate office of virtue to bring about, is highly favourable to that state of both mind and body which is essential to continued and successful effort.

I am sure you will not think I have taken too much for granted in saying that health is an absolute requisite to effective labour; for no doubt your own experience has already taught you some lessons on this subject which you cannot forget. Suppose your occupation be that of a merchant, or a mechanic, or a farmer; and you go to your counting-room, or to your work-shop, or upon your farm, with an enervated, or perhaps inflamed, physical system: you look around you and see that there is much to be done; and, it may be, actually put your hand to the work; but, in the weakness that oppresses, or the fever that burns, or the pain that agonizes, you find a reason for speedily returning to your dwelling, and possibly sending for medical aid. Or, it may be, you are engaged in one of the liberal professions, or per-

haps have devoted yourself to literature and authorship — here again, you go with an enfeebled frame into your office or study, and gird yourself for a conflict with some knotty point in the law, or set yourself to ponder and digest some of the fine passages from the ancient classics — but oh how inadequate you are to the work you have undertaken, and how glad you are to get back to your chamber, where you can sink down into an attitude of comfortable repose! And the saddest illustration of this point is, that labour persevered in, in spite of disease, not unfrequently brings death. Not a year passes but that numbers many a youthful genius among the dead, who, but for acting in defiance of the laws of his physical constitution, might have continued to shine for years with increasing brilliancy.

Virtue tends to the same result also, by prompting to a habit of industry. Without such a habit, no one can ever expect to acquire wealth, unless, by some fortunate accident, it may be thrown into his possession; nor, in the ordinary course of things, will one be likely to retain it long, if he actually does possess it. For where there is not industry, you will rarely find economy: indolence

and prodigality usually go hand in hand; and it matters not how much property may be committed to such an agency as this, it will almost certainly, at no distant period, go to the winds. But, on the contrary, an industrious habit will usually be found associated with an economical habit; and the man whose faculties are kept in vigorous operation for the attainment of any object, will be likely to take good care that the object does not needlessly slip through his hands. But how does it appear that it *is* the tendency of virtue to make one industrious? She teaches every man that those faculties which qualify him for action, are the gift of his Creator, and that, as a responsible agent, he is bound to use them for the purposes for which they are given. She teaches him that the sphere of his activity is designated by the circumstances in which he is placed; and that, if he is called to labour in a worldly vocation, he is to labour diligently, with a view to the accomplishment of the greatest good. And finally, by the influence that she exerts in producing and preserving a healthful state of the faculties, she not only increases the ability to labour, but renders labour pleasant; so that

industry carries with it its own reward. If then wealth is ordinarily to be expected only from industry, and industry is the legitimate product of virtue, we have a right to say that virtue is favourable to this kind of worldly prosperity.

It is another important consideration which you are to note, that a virtuous character always secures public confidence; and all men of business know how indispensable this is to successful enterprize. So numerous and complicated are the relations of business, that no one can go extensively into any department of it, without having much to do with his fellow men—without having frequent occasion to ask facilities of some kind or other in carrying forward his operations; and sometimes momentous issues may be staked on his ability to obtain them. Now, if he have the confidence of the community, as he certainly will have if he be a truly good man, he will ordinarily find it no difficult matter to obtain whatever temporary assistance he may need; nor will those to whom he makes application find occasion even to hesitate, or to make inquiry concerning him, before they determine to respond favourably to his request. And even in cases

where it may be inconvenient to render the desired assistance, there will not be wanting those who will be ready to make a special effort, and even subject themselves to some temporary embarrassment, rather than that *such* a man should suffer seriously and permanently in his worldly interests. You may rest assured that any man,—no matter how much distinguished for shrewdness and foresight he may be—if he has not the confidence of the community in which he lives, labours in any vocation at great disadvantage; whereas, on the other hand, a man of only moderate capacity for business,—if he has a high character for integrity and benevolence, will have every thing to hope from the good will of his neighbours and acquaintances.

But there is one consideration more, which has a bearing on this subject, too important to be omitted—I mean that the good man, even in his worldly pursuits, has a right to expect the special blessing of God. It is of the man who "delighteth greatly in keeping the divine commandments," that inspiration hath said, that "wealth and riches shall be in his house." Notwithstanding there is an established order of

things in the kingdom both of nature and of providence, yet this is not to be regarded as a piece of blind mechanism that moves forward without a mover or a guide; nor yet as being fixed in such a sense that there is no room for the operation of infinite intelligence and infinite benevolence in connection with it: on the contrary, He who originated it and put it in motion, presides over it, every moment; and He is never at a loss how to make it the medium of the fulfilment of his promises, or of the communication of his silent, though special blessing, on the labours of those who trust in him.

After all, I think I hear you saying, "Is not the doctrine of this letter contradicted by common experience? When we look abroad upon the world, do we not find that a large proportion of the rich men are those who put no trust in God, and who scruple not even at the most questionable schemes for obtaining property; and that a multitude of the poor are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?" I reply to this, without altogether denying the fact implied in it, that, though the natural tendencies of things may sometimes be counteracted by the influence of circumstances,

yet they still remain the same; and that we are to regulate our conduct and frame our expectations according to the established order of things, and not according to any devices which may seem to contradict it. And further, if it be admitted, as doubtless it must, that men may become very rich by very unfair means, experience also teaches, and with no less certainty, that property acquired in this way, does not ordinarily remain long in the hands of its possessor. A dishonest man, though he may occasionally succeed in outwitting others, is almost sure, sooner or later, to play the same game successfully on himself. The treasures of such an one are liable to be taken up by every wind; and if they are suffered to remain with him, it will be found at last that there was a concealed canker lodged in them. Here is the true reason, in respect to multitudes, why they are suddenly plunged from affluence to poverty—their possessions were fraudulently procured; and God in judgment permits them to be quickly dissipated. Let all *your* efforts, my young friends, for the acquisition of property, be prompted and directed by virtuous dispositions; and you have reason to

expect that God will crown them with his blessing; or, if he send disappointment, it will be your privilege to know that there is a blessing even in that.

LETTER XIX.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH HONOUR.

Every one who reads the history of Joseph perceives at once the connection between the high character which he maintained and the high places which he occupied. He might have possessed fine intellectual powers, and those powers might have been extensively cultivated, and yet it is by no means certain that he would ever have emerged from the degrading bondage into which his brethren sold him. Neither Potiphar nor Pharaoh would have entrusted him with so much authority, but for the confidence which they felt that he would not abuse it; and this confidence was founded upon a full convic-

tion of his spotless integrity. Need I say that this is but an illustration of the truth which I design to spread before you in this letter — viz. that virtue naturally tends to honour. I use the word *honour* here in two different senses — as denoting the esteem that is generally paid to true worth, and the distinction that pertains to exalted rank.

The best evidence that virtue tends to secure the favourable regards of mankind, is to be found in what we see constantly passing around us. Who are the individuals who enjoy in the highest degree the confidence of the community in which they live; whose example is most frequently held up as worthy of all praise; whose death makes a chasm in society that is sensibly felt and deeply deplored? And, on the other hand, who are they that are looked upon with suspicion, and are trusted, if trusted at all, only within very narrow limits; whose example is referred to only as a thing to be shunned, and whose death is regarded as relieving society from an incubus, if not from a pest? Each of these questions suggests its own answer. He who should require any other proof that virtue secures esteem than what meets him

wherever his eye rests, is either a miserable hypocrite, or else is not to be dealt with as a rational being.

But what I am concerned to do now, is to show you how virtue secures this end. And even this is so obvious that it cannot require any lengthened train of remark.

It results from the very constitution of our nature, that we approve of virtue both in the principle and the practice. Its leading elements are integrity and benevolence; and, though it must be admitted that men may become so desperately corrupt, as to hate these qualities, at least in some of their operations, yet they have, after all, a principle within them, which renders a verdict, constrained though it be, in favour of the right: or, if there be some cases in which depravity is so gross as to bring a film temporarily over the eye of the soul, so that the difference between good and evil is really not discovered, yet that film sooner or later passes off, and the moral perceptions finally become as distinct as ever. Even the operation of justice, which belongs essentially to virtue, finds an advocate in the bosom of the very man whose voice is lifted up

to protest against it. The knave who is arraigned to answer for his fraudulent transactions, the thief who looks forward to his trial as an introduction to the penitentiary, the assassin who has visions of the ignominy and horrour of the scaffold,—however much each of them may attempt to prove his innocence of the crime with which he is charged, he will never think of maintaining that that with which he is charged is no crime; and, in his silent communings with himself, he will be obliged to admit to his own conscience that the magistrate did right when he arrested him, and that the court will do right when they sentence him. The truth is, though it is at the option of men to do right or wrong, it is no easy thing for them, especially in cases of moment, to confound the right and the wrong in their perceptions. And if this be true even in extreme cases, it proves beyond a peradventure, that there is that in the very constitution of man, that renders homage to virtue, antecedently even to the blessings which virtue brings in its train.

But we are to look at it further, as it operates for the well being of society. What are those evils which have the most disastrous bearing upon

social happiness? What but the indulgence of the base and malignant passions of human nature? What but that devotion to sensual gratification that robs man of his humanity? What but that malicious and revengeful spirit that, in resenting one injury, provokes another? What but that cold and withering selfishness, that can look upon suffering with an unpitying eye, and even refuse a morsel of bread to the forlorn and pennyless orphan? But, just in proportion as virtue prevails in a community, these evils are prevented or removed. Virtue saves the expense of sustaining alms-houses and penitentiaries, and prevents the disgrace and suffering incident to a residence in these dwelling places of the guilty. Virtue exerts herself to reclaim those who have begun to wander, and thus to check vice in its incipient stages. Virtue carries bread to the starving poor; and builds hospitals for the sick; and gathers the children of profligate and outcast parents into places of instruction; and erects barriers strong and high against the progress of evil. Virtue softens whatever is rugged in the human character; secures to civil government the ends which it contemplates as a benevolent ministry; and diffuses

an inexpressible charm over the face of society. And who is not interested in the social improvement and elevation of the community in which he lives? If you can tell me who, I will tell you who they are with whom a virtuous life will not be accounted a recommendation.

But there is a yet more particular influence which virtue exerts to secure the good will of mankind — I mean the influence of particular acts of beneficence in awakening the gratitude of those who are the objects of them. We venerate the man who stands forth a great publick benefactor, even though we may have no other interest in his benefaction than has every member of the community to which we belong. But let the favour that is bestowed assume a personal character toward ourselves — and the individual who bestows it becomes more directly an object of our gratitude. A large portion of the deeds of a virtuous man are deeds of benevolence, designed to elevate the character or meliorate the condition of individuals within the circle of his influence. And do you not think that each of these, if he have the common feelings of a man, will find those feelings quickened into

grateful exercise, on being the recipient of the good man's favours? Will not the poor family to whom he sends a portion from his own table, bless him for having remembered them? Will not the child whom his charity rescues from the degradation of the parental home, or perhaps from an incipient career of vagrancy and crime, and elevates first to decency and comfort, and afterwards to respectability and usefulness — will not that child, I ask, to his dying hour, have feelings of thankfulness toward his benefactor which the tongue cannot utter? And will not every one who associates with such a person, — whether superior, inferior, or equal, — receive from him, in the ordinary intercourse of life, some expressions of kindness, which will find a permanent lodgment not only in the memory, but in the heart? It is delightful to a virtuous man to reflect that his general character commands the good will and esteem of his fellow men; but methinks he finds a source of still higher happiness, in the grateful acknowledgments that pour upon him from those, to whom he has been a personal benefactor.

It particularly deserves your consideration that

bad men as well as good, render their homage to virtue;—sometimes when they are, and sometimes when they are not, conscious of doing so. Why is it that the profane man, who, in ordinary circumstances, incorporates an oath with every sentence, and who, when reproved for doing so, pleads that habit has rendered him unconscious of it—why is it that, in the presence of a man of acknowledged and exalted virtue, he can talk without making his usual display of the rhetoric of curses? It is because the majesty of virtue overawes him; and he is constrained to appear reverent in her presence. Why is it that the wretch who has the hardihood to traduce and revile the godly, is sure to represent the good which he would vilify under the aspect of evil—to call conscientiousness, pusillanimity; and devotion, hypocrisy; and charity, ostentation; and zeal, fanaticism? It is for no other reason than that he knows that the virtues which he affects to contemn, are noble and praiseworthy; and that, unless he can pass them off as vices, he cannot hope that his ridicule will catch the ear even of the vicious themselves. And I may add, why is it that men of depraved characters do not

select their own associates in wickedness to discharge for them important and responsible trusts, but that, on the contrary, they are just as careful to inquire into the moral character of the individuals to whom they wish to confide their concerns, as any other persons in the community? Especially how comes it to pass, as it often has done, that infidels who have professedly gloried in their rejection of Christianity, have committed their children to the care and instruction of men of exemplary piety? And to refer to a particular case, how happened it that one of the most scoffing infidels whom this country has ever known, when asked by his daughter on her death-bed, whether he would have her, in that trying hour, believe as he had taught her, or as she had been taught by her pious mother — how happened it, I ask, that the infidel father melted into tears, and exclaimed with a faltering voice, "Believe as your mother has taught you!" There is but one answer to these questions — it is, in every case, the involuntary homage which the soul even of a bad man renders to true virtue. These cases show that there is not a little hypocrisy even in the most blustering infidelity; and that the worst

of men, in trying times, are glad to come under the protection, even though they may not enlist under the banner, of Christianity.

It must be acknowledged that honour, when considered as indicating the distinction that belongs to rank or office, is, by no means uniformly, or even very frequently, the reward of a virtuous course; nor is mere virtue, apart from intelligence, entitled to such distinction. An individual may be a pattern of all that is amiable and praiseworthy in his social relations, and may even be distinguished for his exhibition of the Christian graces, and yet, for want of sufficient vigour of mind, or of the due cultivation of his powers, he may be utterly unfit to wield the influences which belong to an exalted station. But, even admitting that virtue is associated with intelligence, and with all the other requisite qualifications for being clothed with civil authority, it will depend, after all, especially under such a government as ours, on the moral state of the community, whether it shall find the exaltation which it deserves. It is a lamentable fact, which our experience as a nation forbids us to doubt, that party spirit may invest weakness and corrup-

tion with high authority, and leave the most exalted virtue, even when associated with the most exalted intelligence, to the obscurity of a private station. But let virtue in a community become triumphant, — let the publick conscience be suitably enlightened, and the publick morals duly elevated, — and the wise and good will no longer be suffered to remain in obscurity: even though their modesty should court retirement, the suffrages of their fellow citizens will bring them forth, and elevate them to places of trust and influence. Nay, it will sometimes happen that men of this character will be exalted to high places, in a community that is deeply corrupt; for, as one bad man is not usually disposed to confide his most important personal interests to another bad man, so a community which vice has essentially corrupted, may, from purely selfish considerations, prefer to trust *its* interests with men of integrity and wisdom. This principle will be found to operate especially in respect to subordinate offices, which it is left to the discretion of the superior in authority to fill; for, while there is here less room for party spirit to operate, the things chiefly regarded are the ability and

fidelity with which the duties of the office will probably be discharged.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that, in a virtuous community, good men, other things being equal, are the fairest candidates for the high places of trust;—indeed, they are the only class who can aspire to such places with any hope of success: and, even in the most equivocal state of society, they will not unfrequently be elevated through the influence of mere publick selfishness. And as for bad men,—though they may occupy posts of honour, and may live amidst the splendours of rank and the incense of flattery, yet they can never personally become the objects of general esteem and regard. Be examples of true virtue, and you need have no fear but that the world will find it out, and will honour you for every noble quality with which your character is adorned. If you rise to an exalted station, it is well—you will be prepared to fill it with dignity and advantage: but if you spend your days in retirement, it is well also; for there too virtue will weave for you a chaplet in the grateful regards and benedictions of your fellow creatures.

LETTER XX.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH USEFULNESS.

What a noble example of usefulness was Joseph in every relation which he sustained—in every condition in which he was placed! Of what he was to the Midianitish merchants, previous to his being sold to Potiphar, we have no account; but, from that period to the close of his life, the monuments of his benevolent activity are continually rising before us. It was the disposition which he manifested to render himself useful, that caused him to be advanced in the house of Potiphar; and there he was most heartily and zealously devoted to his master's interests. During his confinement in prison,—though he was conscious that it was a most unjust and cruel confinement,—yet he was constantly occupied in some useful way; and very soon was entrusted with the general oversight of all his fellow prisoners. And then when he became governour of the

land—who can calculate the amount of good that he accomplished? The single precaution that he took for saving the land of Egypt from the threatening famine, was the means of averting an amount of distress which it is not easy to calculate; and not merely from the people of Egypt, but, as it turned out, from his own immediate family. All the publick concerns of the country he seems to have managed with the utmost skill and success; and no doubt the period of his administration was unprecedented in respect to both publick and private happiness. But doubtless we must reckon his greatest usefulness as connected with the immediate fortunes of his own house, and the remoter and higher interests of the church of God. We need not—perhaps we cannot—suppose that he was fully aware of the relation which he maintained to the church in all future ages; of the vital importance of the agency which he was carrying forward, to the accomplishment of the grandest promise of Jehovah. It was enough for him that he was always faithfully and earnestly engaged in doing his duty. But to us it appears manifest that what he did, constituted an important link in the chain of

causes and effects, by which the triumph of God's mercy in the scheme of redemption is finally to be accomplished.

What was true of Joseph is true of every other good man—his life is crowned with usefulness. Here again, for the truth of this remark, I refer you to your own observation. I will only ask your attention to a few thoughts illustrative of the manner in which virtue operates to secure this end.

Let me say then, in the first place, virtue renders its possessor useful, by securing to his faculties their right direction and their legitimate exercise. The good man recognizes his obligation not only to exert the powers which God has given him, but to exert them for purposes of good; and if he is tempted to pervert them to mere selfish gratification, even though no positive evil to his fellow men may be involved, he will find himself subjected to self-reproach from having neglected duly to consider his Creator's claims. And not only is his judgment on this subject suitably enlightened and convinced, but his heart goes along with his judgment; and while he approves the right he also loves it. He engages

in doing good, therefore, in obedience not only to a command of God most clearly revealed, but also, if I may be allowed the expression, to one of the instincts of his renovated nature. And the same authority which enjoins this — the same temper that disposes to it, may be expected to secure the full amount of benevolent activity of which he is capable. Let a man know what God requires of him, and have the disposition to fulfil the requisition, and it is impossible to conceive that such a man should live either to do wrong or to do nothing. As this knowledge and this disposition are both included in true virtue, it is manifest that virtue is essentially the parent of usefulness.

But while virtue keeps the faculties appropriately employed, she makes the most of all those opportunities for doing good which grow out of the various relations and conditions in life. Place her where you will, and she finds means of usefulness, which she diligently and scrupulously improves. In the various occupations and professions in which the mass of men look for nothing beyond their own aggrandizement, the truly good man finds channels innumerable through which

to send forth a healthful and quickening influence on the neighbourhood, the community, the world.

Virtue renders any station that is not in itself dishonourable, subservient to the publick good. Take, for instance, the military man—though his profession is so intimately associated with peril and death, and is often exercised in the face of honour and justice, yet who can doubt that it may be—ought to be—rendered tributary to the great interests of the human family? Napoleon indeed exercised it in obedience to the dictates of a burning ambition—in his hands it was a frightful engine of wrath and wo—he was a man of one idea; and that idea was the complete subjugation of the nations to his usurped authority. And though God may have overruled for good what he did, yet his mad and terrific movements were all directed by the spirit of evil. But how was it with our own Washington? With him the military profession, being under the direction of virtue, became the instrument of national happiness and glory;—nay, it was a ministration of good to the whole human family, through all succeeding generations; for

while it was the means of securing our nation's independence, it has spread, or is destined to spread, the savour of true liberty all over the world. No doubt Washington had, from the beginning, the most enlarged views of the enterprize, and beheld in its success the triumph of a principle which is destined to work a mighty change in the whole structure of human society; but it may well be doubted whether even his far reaching eye overtook all the mighty results which less than half a century has developed. If, with his great military prowess, he had had Arnold's heart, or even the heart of many a man that is not disgraced before the world, where would have been this tree of liberty under whose shadow we repose, and the leaves of which are already beginning to operate for the healing of the nations? It may be that no other opportunity may occur to the end of time for rendering the military profession subservient to so important a purpose as was accomplished by Washington; but there is not a soldier so insignificant, even during the prevalence of the most undisturbed peace, but that he may use his profession to purposes of good—if in no other way, at least

in endeavouring to elevate the character of his military associates.

Next, look at the man who occupies an important civil station, and see how much good may be accomplished by his well directed influence. Our own history furnishes a galaxy of illustrious statesmen, any one of whom might be selected to illustrate the high usefulness which legitimately belongs to such a sphere. The virtuous statesman has his hand directly on the springs of the public weal. His voice is heard and heeded, where a thousand other voices might speak in vain. Perplexing questions are unravelled by his wisdom, and base projects are exposed and defeated by his integrity. And beside his publick influence, his official dignity gives additional consideration to his private acts —the legislator or the judge is so identified with the man, that the respect which attaches to the one, extends also to the other. An action performed by an obscure individual might awaken little attention and produce little effect; when the same action performed by a man of exalted rank might exert an influence that would be felt through all the pores of society.

The legal profession too opens a wide field of usefulness to the man of right views and dispositions. There is scarcely any thing in the organization of society, more intimately connected with its well being, than the legitimate operation of the law. In this world of injustice and injury, there should be some means of redress which may be relied on — some system of procedure by which the weak may sustain themselves against the strong — the oppressed against the arrogant. This is just the relief which the law contemplates, and which, if rightly administered, it effectually secures. It is true indeed that there is no profession more capable than this of being perverted to purposes of evil; and, in the hands of multitudes, it is nothing better than the minister of strife, not to say, the instrument of oppression: but, let an individual engage in it conscientiously, and with a sincere desire to witness the triumph of truth and justice rather than the triumph of his skill, — and his influence will diffuse itself most gratefully over the whole community; he will be regarded, and justly, as the friend of the injured; and, after he is dead, his name will not be forgotten, but multitudes will

rise up to bear witness to his good deeds and honour him as a conscientious lawyer.

The merchant also — especially the opulent merchant — can you measure the amount of good which he has it in his power to accomplish? By his fair and honourable dealing, he may do much to elevate the general character of commercial intercourse; by being a pattern of honesty and punctuality and general exactness in trade, he may do much to extend the same spirit and rebuke the opposite among his fellow merchants; and thus society at large may reap the benefit of his example. But I chiefly refer here to the good uses which he may make of his wealth, in advancing the best interests of his fellow men. He may not only carry portions to the needy in his own neighbourhood, and thus cause the heart of many a widow to sing for joy, but he may make permanent provision for the relief of wretchedness in various forms, which shall bring to him the blessing of multitudes who are ready to perish. If you inquire by whom our alms-houses and hospitals and lunatick asylums are chiefly endowed; by whom the noble institutions for the promotion of learning scattered here and there

over the land, have been founded; by whom the largest contributions for the extension of the gospel in heathen lands have been made; I greatly mistake if you do not find that the brightest names on these lists of the world's benefactors are merchants — that no small part of the money that has been thus bestowed for the good of mankind, has been earned by diligently, if you please doggedly, buying and selling goods.

I might, in the same way, go through with all the other professions and occupations in which men engage, which are in accordance with integrity and honour, and show you how each of them may be — under the direction of virtue, actually is — subservient to useful purposes. But I will only add that there is no condition so obscure — none even so wretched — but that it will open a field of usefulness to a good man. Suppose that he is so obscure that, though he is in your immediate neighbourhood, you never hear of him — yet there are those who do know him, and to whom he has access in daily intercourse. These he can influence by his example, his conversation, perhaps by his prayers; and it is by no means improbable that some will dwell in heaven forever,

because they have dwelt on earth within the circle of his influence. Or suppose that he is left to linger out years upon a sick bed, and is thereby cut off from all intercourse, except with those who come to sympathize in his affliction, or minister to his wants — even there he may be an eminently useful man. By his faith in God, his cheerful submission, his elevated devotion, he may leave an indelible impression for good on those who are about his bedside; and the story of what passes there may penetrate some other hearts to which it may be communicated; and the prayers which he offers up may be the medium through which the richest blessings shall be conveyed to multitudes whom he has never seen. I repeat, it is the privilege of the good man to be useful always — he may be sick and poor, he may be unknown and forgotten, he may even be imprisoned and manacled, and yet, so long as he has lips that can move in prayer, or a heart that can beat to the spiritual miseries of the world, you may not say that he is a cumberer of the ground.

What a delightful employment to reflect on a useful life, when life is drawing to a close! How transported must have been the apostle, when he

could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!" You, my young friends, will soon be in his circumstances, in respect to the opening of another world upon your spirits. Murmur not, though God place you in the humblest circumstances here; but be thankful that, even in these circumstances, your consciences may at least bear testimony to a useful life. Let this blessed result be accomplished in your experience, and be your condition on earth what it may, you need not envy the rich man his wealth, nor the statesman his laurels, nor the monarch his crown.

LETTER XXI.

VIRTUE CROWNED WITH HEAVEN.

You have seen that Joseph was an eminently religious man. His religious character embraced not merely the outward act but the inward principle. He was one of the patriarchs who "died

in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" for whom God "hath prepared a city." His life had been one of singular vicissitude — multiplied blessings were mingled with multiplied trials; — but the period at length came, when that "better country, that is, an heavenly," which had so long been the object of his desire, and for which it had been the great business of his life to prepare, rose upon his delighted eye, perhaps while he was yet among the clouds and mists that hang about the valley of death. What a moment of ecstacy was that, in which he was permitted to feel that the work of his life was fully accomplished, that its cares and toils and calamities were all over, and that he was in the act of entering on that "rest" which "remaineth for the people of God!" Here we reach the crowning part of Joseph's reward. He had indeed experienced many blessings, in consequence of his integrity and piety, while he was on earth; — the blessing of a good reputation, of inward peace, of great worldly prosperity; but here is something that casts all

previous blessings into the shade — knowledge without perplexing doubts; joy without an alloy of grief; life without even the fear of death. Who would not desire to be like Joseph in his end? Who would not account all earthly sufferings light, if they might be followed with the crown that fadeth not away?

You, my young friends, especially if you are living under the power of a practical Christianity, have already experienced — are daily experiencing — many rich blessings, which make a powerful claim upon your gratitude; but the present compared with the future is like the faintest gleam of the morning to the sun shining in his strength. Heaven — Heaven is the great object, upon which you are to fasten your regards and your hopes; for it is not more certain that you have the principle of true religion in your hearts, than that the glories of that better world are made sure to you.

You observe that I speak of Heaven as the ultimate reward of a good man; but to those of you who are entitled, in view of your present character, to expect this reward, I surely need not say that it does not come to you in consequence of your own deservings. It is indeed a

purchased possession; but it has been purchased by the blood of Christ; and it comes to you as a free gift. But though purchased—though free, it can never become yours, independently of a compliance with the terms on which it is offered: it is the completion of your salvation; and salvation is bestowed only on them who exercise repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, Heaven is not the same to all its glorified inhabitants. Its felicities are measured out according to the character which each individual has had during the period of his pilgrimage. As one star differeth from another star in glory in the natural firmament, so there will be a corresponding diversity in the firmament of glorified intelligences. Notwithstanding it is by the grace of God that the feeblest saint who is but scarcely saved, has his place in the world of glory, yet each one will receive according to that he hath done, as if the reward were adjudged according to the actual degrees of merit. The word of God fully justifies us in reckoning Heaven as a reward; but it is a reward not of debt, but of grace. While it marks the measure of Christian attainment, it is a testimony to the strength

of divine love and the efficacy of Christ's mediation.

But what *is* Heaven? Who can adequately answer this question? Inspiration, in the attempt to describe it, hath gathered images of beauty and grandeur from every part of the creation; and yet perhaps the highest idea of Heaven that it has conveyed to us, is in such passages as these—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." If even the pen of inspiration falters in the attempt to produce a sketch of the city of our God—the new Jerusalem,—how poor and frigid must be any thing that mortals can say, compared with the glorious reality!

As the language of scripture, intended to describe the glory of the heavenly state, is necessarily in a great degree figurative, in order that it may be accommodated to our feeble comprehension, it were rash for us to attempt to decide with confidence on the meaning of at

least some portions of it, except in a more general manner. We may be able to see that it indicates the most refined and exalted enjoyment, without knowing precisely in what that enjoyment consists, or from what it more immediately proceeds. But, perhaps the most satisfactory view that we can take of Heaven, is to consider it as including the perfection of our own nature, and the presence of every thing that is fitted to advance us from glory to glory.

It is a delusion to which most men constantly yield, that happiness consists chiefly in the ability to command that which is without; and hence the man who lives in opulence and honour, is regarded by the multitude as of course a happy man. But you may rest assured that, even in this life, happiness has chiefly to do with the world within: it is just in proportion as the faculties are kept in harmony with each other and the will of God—in other words, as the whole spiritual man is in a sound and healthful state, that there is a foundation for true happiness; and it is because man is here, at best, so very imperfect a being, that the highest measure of bliss which he enjoys falls so far short of his

original capabilities. But, in reaching Heaven, man attains to the perfection of his nature. His intellectual faculties—his perception, his memory, his imagination, his judgment, lose all the dimness and weakness that had pertained to them, and are endued with a vigour and energy that make him a wonder to himself. At the same time, his moral nature undergoes a corresponding exaltation: his conscience is always a minister of peace; his affections and desires are endued with immortal purity and strength. The image of his Redeemer was faintly impressed upon his soul in the act of spiritual renovation; and it became more and more distinct as he advanced in his pilgrimage; but now it shines forth in complete and undisputed perfection. Time was when no one could say whether he would sink into a fiend or rise into an angel; but it has turned out that he was destined to be a child of the skies, and to bear witness for his Redeemer forever, through his renovated nature. How different a being is man in Heaven, from man on earth! How different is this weakness from that immortal strength — this darkness from

that surpassing light — this poverty of the mind from that ever enduring, ever increasing riches!

We have associated the body so much with the soul's exercises and enjoyments in this world, that it may require a severe effort, so to break away from the delusions of sense, as to realize that the soul can be advanced to this state of perfection, while the body is in the grave. But of the truth of this, God's holy word forbids us to doubt. The falling of the earthly tabernacle is the signal for the immortal spirit to burst forth in the energy of a new life, and to shine forth in the beauty of a new creation. The body moulders, and finally mingles with the clods of the valley. But it is there for a temporary slumber only. It is resting in hope until the great resurrection day. And then, as sure as there is energy in the archangel's voice, it will come forth, refashioned by the same hand that made it at first, into a body like unto Christ's glorious body, that will be a fit habitation for the already glorified spirit. And now that the union between the glorified soul and the glorified body is effected, we have the perfection of the whole man: the same being who lived on this earth, and whose

faculties were accommodated to this lower state of existence, now lives in Heaven, with faculties fitted to subserve the great ends of his existence there. Oh judge not of man, from what you see him to be on earth — judge of him rather by what he is hereafter to be in Heaven.

But we have not yet reached the full idea of Heaven; for while it includes the exaltation and perfection of man's nature, it includes also every thing that is necessary to meet the soul's desires, and to carry it forward through an endlessly progressive course of intelligence, purity and bliss. Notwithstanding the seat of enjoyment is in the soul, we know that even here, we are indebted for our happiness, in no small degree, to objects that are without us: as we contemplate the wonders of nature and providence, we find our knowledge constantly extending, and our admiration of the works and ways of God increasing. As we mingle in our social relations, and discharge the various obligations of justice and charity, and indulge in an intercommunication of thought and feeling in respect to the objects in which we are interested, our intellects expand, and our hearts warm, and our happiness is proportion-

ally increased. And the same general economy will prevail in Heaven. The glorified mind will be surrounded with glorious objects of contemplation: new forms of intellectual and moral beauty, will rise up on every side to occupy and enrapture; new discoveries will be made continually of the character, the government, the works, of God; especially will the glory of the plan of redemption unfold with an ever increasing lustre; and each step in the progress of discovery will mark a progressive enlargement of the soul's capacities, and will be a preparation for flights yet more lofty, for researches yet more profound, into the heights and depths of the divine perfections. And then what a communion will that be which the saint in Heaven shall enjoy with the various orders of existence with which Heaven is peopled! How delightful must be the intercourse of glorified minds with each other; how vigorous will be the operation of the social principle; how free from every thing that embitters their communion here; how full of every thing that can render it profitable and joyous! The angels — the native inhabitants of Heaven — they too are the saint's companions; and though

they belong to a higher order of existence than he, yet they consider it a privilege to be associated with him in searching into the mysteries of his redemption, and even in celebrating that event in the immortal song. Jesus the mediator of the new covenant — the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person — the man of sorrows exalted into a union with perfect Deity — He too will be there; and the saints will have free access to him, and intimate communion with him; and while he will receive their unceasing homage, he will crown them in return with his perpetual benedictions. But why should I attempt to penetrate the upper sanctuary? I would be contented for the present to see through a glass darkly, in the hope that this darkness will ere long pass away, and that my spirit will be entranced in the glory that is to follow.

I cannot conclude this letter, and especially this series of letters, without admonishing you to beware that you do not expect this glorious reward on any other terms than those which Christianity prescribes. There is indeed a spurious virtue — a virtue which expends itself upon the outer man, chiefly in adjusting and adorning the various

social relations; and it has its reward in a thousand ways,—all of which, however, have respect to the life that now is. You must look beyond the grace and the loveliness of nature, if you will travel in the path that terminates in Heaven. You must possess that virtue which is originated and nourished by an influence from the Redeemer's cross. You must realize that, as a sinner, you owe to God's justice a debt that you can never cancel; and that that debt will remain against you forever, unless you take advantage of that Heaven-devised provision which the gospel reveals for securing to you a free forgiveness. In the exercise of sincere penitence for sin, you must welcome Christ as your Saviour, and desire and expect salvation only through the merit of his blood. In humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, you must devote yourself to the service of God, and aim continually at higher degrees of conformity to his will. This do, and you may, with perfect confidence, anticipate Heaven as your final home.

My young friends, I here close the hints of admonition and counsel which I designed to address to you. I am willing to hope that it has

not been in vain that I have thus held up before you the amiable and exemplary Joseph. If I mistake not, the history has furnished a happy illustration of true religion, both as it exists in the heart, and as it is acted out in the life. Thankful indeed shall I be, if the perusal of what I have written shall render you more wise, or useful, or happy, in the present life; but I own that my purpose will not be answered, if it shall not also exert an influence in reference to the higher interests of the life to come. I will only say, let your religion, as was that of Joseph, be the religion of principle, the religion of feeling, the religion of action—then will it accomplish in respect to you a perfect work, and make you all that you can reasonably desire to be in both worlds. Happy, thrice happy are ye, that your lot has been cast amidst the influences of our divine Christianity. Welcome, welcome this good angel to your heart, and she will guard you amidst all life's dangers, guide you amidst all life's perplexities, sustain you under all life's burdens, and finally accompany you in your upward flight, and remain the everlasting inmate of your bosom in brighter worlds.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY

ERASTUS H. PEASE,

ALBANY, N. Y.

SWEET'S

PRACTICAL ELOCUTION:

NOTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

From the Albany Argus.

SWEET'S PRACTICAL ELOCUTION, *designed as a Text and reading Book in Common Schools and Higher Institutions.*

This work is now stereotyped and published by E. H. Pease, of this city. The author has carefully revised the work, and made some important additions. The first 54 pages comprise observations on Elocution, a phonological exhibition of the elementary sounds of the English language, illustrations and examples for exercises in articulation, emphasis, quantity, climax, rhetorical pause, and inflections of the voice. The remaining 258 pages contain 137 pieces for exercise in reading and recitation, selected from the best and purest writings of the present and former ages. To furnish an agreeable variety of exercises for schools, a number of pieces have been inserted, which are as suitable for singing as for elocutionary reading.

But the peculiar feature of this work, which pre-eminently distinguishes it from all others on the subject, is, the Explanatory Notes attached to each piece. These may be regarded as the *sine-qua-non*—the indispensable condition of correct and elegant recitation, and of good reading.

The work appears in a tasteful and substantial form, and does credit to the publisher.

Extract from a Recommendation furnished by S. W. Seton, Esq., *Agent of the Public School Society of the city of New York.*

Having examined Mr. Sweet's work on Practical Elocution, I do not hesitate to express my favorable opinion of his system, believing it to be better adapted to common schools, and every purpose of *rhetorical instruction*, than any other. Being a *natural system*, it cannot but be both easily comprehended and practised. It is to be wished, that a system so true to nature may prevail and give the *breath of life* to the future orators of the American forum and senate. The selections for exercise, so far as I have examined, seem worthy of approval, as tests of rhetorical skill, and a medium of pure moral impressions. The explanation of the subject matter of each extract is a useful guide and model in practice, and the teacher will find it easy to extend *still further* such necessary descriptions previous to reading or reciting.

New York, June 17, 1846.

From L. P. Brockett, M. D., *of Hartford, Ct.*

Sweet's Practical Elocution.—It is with sincere pleasure, and from a full conviction of its merits, that the writer, after careful examination, recommends the work of Prof. Sweet, to the attention of teachers, and the public. The work possesses three prominent excellencies, which give it a strong claim upon the public regard. These are,

1*st. This system of Elocution is natural and easy, and at the same time eminently philosophical;*

2*d. The selections are generally new and made with great care and judgment.*

3*d. The Historical, Biographical and Critical Notes, appended to each selection, render the work highly valuable.*

As an illustration, take Webster's version of the speech of John Adams, in defence of the Declaration of Independence. How does the knowledge of the circumstances in which Adams was placed, heighten our admiration for his patriotism, and lead us, imbued with the same spirit, to enunciate those noble sentiments, in some measure, as he himself would have done. And with how much more pathos, can we read that sweet little lyric of Gen. Morris, "Woodman, spare that tree," after learning the interesting incident, related on the 148th page. The only wonder is, that writers on Elocution have not, ere this, perceived the necessity of this aid, in the delivery of their selections. The notes, so far as we have had opportunity of verifying them, seem remarkably free from errors in regard to facts, and the known reputation of the Professor, is sufficient guaranty of the accuracy and correctness of his directions for reading. The style in which the work is brought out, is very creditable to its worthy publisher, Mr. E. H. Pease.

Hartford, Ct., June 22, 1846.

Sweet's Practical Elocution.

From the Saratoga Republican.

SWEET'S ELOCUTION.—With pleasure we announce a new and greatly improved edition of this valuable school book. It has already passed through three editions, and now comes to us in a fourth, revised with the greatest care, and made permanent, at the stereotype establishment of the Messrs. Davisons, of this village.

To those who are not acquainted with the book, we would say, with assurance, that it will meet with approval. Examine the work. Independent of the admirable directions for speaking and reading, the choice extracts, of which the book is mostly made up, will well repay the perusal. We hope this book may be introduced into our schools, and as a consequence, that the rising generation may be readers and speakers who do not violate every rule of natural elocution.

From the Hon. ALFRED CONKLING, *Judge of the United States Courts.*

OWASCO, (near Auburn,) April 26, 1841.

Having examined "Sweet's Elocution," it affords me pleasure to recommend it for reading and declamation in American schools. The *notes* appended to the pieces are instructive and useful and render it, in connection with its other merits, preferable to any other work of its kind with which I am acquainted.

ALFRED CONKLING.

From the Hon. REUBEN HYDE WALWORTH, *Chancellor of the State of New-York.*

SARATOGA SPRINGS, July 23, 1845.

Dear Sir—I have examined your "Practical Elocution, so far as my time would allow, and am satisfied it is a valuable school book for the instruction of youth, in the principles as well as the practice of reading and speaking well. It may also be studied with profit by most persons who are more advanced in life. I therefore trust you will be successful in the new edition which you propose to stereotype. Yours, &c.

R. HYDE WALWORTH.

S. N. SWEET, Professor of Elocution.

From Gov. SEWARD.

ALBANY, Nov. 28, 1839.

My Dear Sir—I return you my thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of your useful work on Elocution. I have carefully examined it, and am satisfied that it will prove eminently useful in our public schools. Accept my congratulations. It ought to be a source of great satisfaction to you that you have accomplished a work which will exert a beneficial influence in

the education of our countrymen. With sincere wishes for your continued usefulness, I remain your old friend and obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

SAMUEL N. SWEET, Esquire, Professor of Elocution.

The Opinion of Rev. IRA MAYHEW, *Superintendent of Common Schools in the county of Jefferson, now Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Michigan.*

Professor SAMUEL N. SWEET :

Dear Sir—Soon after the first edition of your "Elocution" was published, I purchased a copy, with the examination of which, I was so well pleased, that I immediately introduced it as a text-book into the Seminary, then under my supervision. It was a favorite work with my pupils, and was by many of them perused not only with great pleasure but with much profit. Indeed, I have never known advanced students use any other reading book with so much of both pleasure and profit. The explanatory notes accompanying the pieces, add much to the value of the work.

I remain as ever, yours truly,

IRA MAYHEW.

Adams, Jefferson co., N. Y., January 1, 1843.

The Opinion of the Committee on Books, extracted from the Report o their Chairman, Rev. JOHN SESSIONS, *of Sandlake, made to the County Education Society, of the county of Rensselaer, and adopted, June* 27, 1845.

"Sweet's Elocution is sufficiently recommended by being used in some twenty Academies in the state of New-York, under the care of the Regents of the University. The elements of good reading and speaking are forcibly set forth by Professor Sweet, and the pieces for practice are of the highest order."

The Opinions of Rev. GEORGE W. EATON, D. D., *Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and Rev.* ASAHEL C. KENDRICK, A. M., *Professor of the Latin and Greek Languages in the Theological and Literary Institution at Hamilton, N. Y.*

"We have examined 'Sweet's Elocution,' and we think it is a very excellent work on that important branch of education. The pieces which it contains, accompanied as they are by explanatory notes, are well adapted to the purposes of teaching, and learning reading and oratory. They are moreover of a high order in their moral tone. We should be glad to see this book in general use in our institutions of learning.

GEORGE W. EATON,
ASAHAL C. KENDRICK.

Hamilton, Nov. 33d, 1843.

From LORENZO L. BAKER, ESQUIRE, *Town Superintendent of the Town of Lee, Oneida County, N. Y.*

We have succeeded in introducing more than two hundred copies of Professor Sweet's invaluable work on elocution into the common schools of the town of Lee. As a finishing reading book, we must give it a decided preference.

LORENZO L. BAKER.

Lee Centre, February 7th, 1846.

The opinion of the Committee on Books, extracted from their Report, submitted to the Board of Education of the City of Rochester, October 5, 1843, which on motion was adopted and ordered to be published.

A work entitled "Practical Elocution," by Professor Samuel N. Sweet, has been laid before the committee. A brief examination of it has satisfied them that it is a work admirably adapted to improve pupils in the art of speaking and reading. The selections are from the best writers and speakers the world has known, and are suited alike to pupils of common schools and those more advanced. As such, it is earnestly commended to the attention of the teachers of Public Schools.

L. K. FAULKNER,
Chairman of the Committee on Books.

The Opinion of the HON. MR. BROWN.

Professor S. N. SWEET:

Dear Sir—Your "Practical Elocution" is, in my judgment, a work of superior merit. It contains a very great variety of style and sentiment, and the selections appear to have been made not only with much good taste, but with peculiar adaptation to the design of the work.

A book on Elocution should exhibit the best specimens of writing in the language, and a book to be used as a reading book should aim not only to instruct the head but to cultivate the heart. *This* your book will do, from the fact that you have selected from the best and purest writings of the present age, and of former ages.

There are in this book some pieces of chaste and sterling wit, some of great pathos, some of extreme beauty and sublimity, and they are all of great practical utility. The instruction which the book contains is calculated to be useful to the reader. This is a consideration very important in a book to be used by youth.

The book is valuable for the notes of explanation which follow each extract, as well as for the number, variety and excellence of the extracts themselves. I would most cordially recommend this work, not only to schools but to private families; it is

interesting and instructive to the general reader, as well as to the student of Elocution.

Assembly Chamber, Albany, May 6, 1845.

LYSANDER H. BROWN,

Late Dep. Sup't of Jeff. co., and Chairman of the Committee on Colleges, Academies and Common Schools in the New-York Legislature.

From the Christian Advocate and Journal.

PRACTICAL ELOCUTION, BY PROF. S. N. SWEET.—The author of this work has brought to his assistance an extensive and familiar acquaintance with the best writers on Elocution, and a personal knowledge of the principal orators of our country. Besides this, he has brought the fruits of his own practice and observation, which have been extended for several years, through many of the states. Professor Sweet has shown himself to be no theorist. His work is highly practical. His very theory is practice. He has not attempted to lay down every thing by rule, but has left something to the dictates of common sense and taste. *Multum in parvo* seems to have been the author's motto.

His "Select pieces," which make the second part of his book, are selected with great ability and good taste from the vast fields of ancient and modern lore, and are, of themselves, well worth the price of the book. To these pieces he has appended notes, historical and critical, which greatly enhance the value of the work. The author does not abandon his pupil after the prescription of a few abstract rules, but generously offers to conduct him through all those varied and difficult exercises by which he acquires the mastery of the science. This assistance, he has greatly rendered in his notes.

New-York, Nov. 29, 1839.

Want of room obliges us to omit commendatory notices from the following, among other popular Journals of the day:

New York Evangelist.
Auburn Journal and Advertiser.
Cayuga Patriot.
Northern Advocate.
New York Tribune.
New York Commercial Advertiser.
Courier and Enquirer.
New Yorker.

SOW WELL AND REAP WELL:

Or Fireside Education. By S. G. Goodrich, *author of Peter Parley's Tales. Third Edition. Albany: Erastus H. Pease.* 1846.

This is the title of a neatly printed and well bound volume of 343 pages, laid upon our table by the publisher. The name of the author of this excellent work is too well known to the friends of Education, both in this country and Europe, to require any thing more than a mere announcement of the book. It is eminently practical in all its suggestions, and should be in the hands of every parent and teacher.

We have only to present a few of the subjects considered, to indicate the character of the work, to wit: "Provision of Providence that the controlling lessons of life shall be given by parents. The Fireside. Obligations of parents. Leading characteristics of children. Family Government, &c." There are but few even of the best educated among parents or teachers, who would not be greatly benefitted by this work, and we hope, for the welfare of society, that this book may be widely circulated and carefully read.—*Teachers' Advocate.*

Maffit's Magazine, (edited by Rev. J. N. Maffit,) says:

The third edition of this most excellent work, by the far famed Peter Parley, should be in the possession of every family. Indeed, when we con its pages, we wonder somewhat how families get along without it. It seems so indispensable to young mothers, aye, and to young fathers too, and we might safely add, to a great many old ones, that we can never hereafter consider any family library complete, or any child dealt as fairly with as it ought to be where this book is wanting. The very preface is a volume in itself.

A valuable book from the press of E. H. Pease of this city. The type is very clear and large, and the general execution more than creditable. The matter is decidedly useful, and what is of not less importance, narrated in the original vein of the well-known Peter Parley. The most instructive lessons are soon forgotten, unless graven upon the memory by some striking peculiarity. The present work is admirably calculated for the young of both sexes.—*Albany Atlas.*

Sow Well and Reap Well.

The following is from the American Quarterly Journal of Agriculture and Science, edited by Dr. E. Emmons and A. Osborn, Esq.

Mr. Goodrich, the author of the work entitled *Sow Well and Reap Well*, is known wherever the young are permitted and encouraged to read; he has scattered precious seed over the hills of New England, and upon the prairies of the west and south of our great country; and even on the shores of Europe it has fallen, and in his own day he has gathered the mature and ripened fruit. The special object of the author of this work is to enforce the doctrine, that none need expect to reap a better fruit than he has sown. The doctrine is based upon a natural law, and is illustrated and enforced by the common results and experience of every day.

It is by such books as this circulating throughout our country, that we hope to see the true ends and aims of life distinctly comprehended, and as positively acted upon. And at such times as these upon which we have fallen, do we need checks to certain evils which are growing up in the literary and political worlds.

This work is intended to illustrate "Fireside Education," and every page is replete with original thought and valuable counsel. This is the third edition, and is published by E. H. Pease, Bookseller, State street. We cordially recommend it to all, as a book to be read with profit.—*Albany Citizen.*

I have read with great pleasure, Fireside Education, and believe it is not only much needed, but well calculated to advance the noblest work of man, the tuition of the heart.—*Hon. D. P. King, of the Mass. Senate.*

The exceeding great popularity of Mr. Goodrich's writings will secure to this work a favorable reception, and indeed it deserves such a reception.—*Annals of Education.*

This work may be read with a vast deal more profit and pleasure than can be obtained from most books on education.

The principles of morality and intellectual culture are treated in a style at once simple and familiar.—*New England Papers.*

A noble work—the author speaks to *men*, to Americans, and Christians, in a dignified and powerful manner, and it deserves the earnest consideration of all.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

Chaste and energetic in style, and every page imparting a sound and rational philosophy.—*Troy paper.*

Mr. Goodrich is a great benefactor of the human race. He has long been devoted to the benevolent object of establishing a proper system of education.—*New York Paper.*

It is written in a style of elegant simplicity, and the subjects discussed are rendered as brilliant as noonday.

Fireside Education is one of the best books ever published on this subject.

Simple, concise, and like every thing from the pen of Peter Parley, exceedingly instructive.—*Philadelphia Papers.*

Perhaps no volume ever issued from the American press of greater practical utility than Fireside Education.—*Baltimore Papers.*

It mainly teaches, in a most beautiful style, and with pertinent and interesting illustrations, those truths concerning the formation of character by domestic influences which have been well established by the common sense and experience of mankind.—*New-York Observer.*

CATECHISM OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY AND GEOLOGY:

By JAMES F. W. JOHNSTON, M. A., F. R. SS. L. & E
with an Introduction by JOHN PITKIN NORTON, *of Farmington, Connecticut.*

RECOMMENDATIONS.

From HON. SAMUEL YOUNG, *Secretary of State, and Superintendent of Common Schools of the State of New York:*

I have carefully examined the Catechism of Professor Johnston, on Agriculture. It is the only scientific work on that subject I have ever seen, which by its shortness and simplicity is adapted to the capacity of children; and which, on being illustrated by cheap and simple experiments, as he recommends, cannot fail to make a lasting impression on the juvenile mind.

It gives the analysis of different plants, of animals and of soils, exhibiting the organic and inorganic substances of which they are composed, and teaching the important truths that vegetables derive a part of their nourishment from the air, and the remainder from the earth; that different vegetables require different kinds of food, and in variable quantities; that the soil may be destitute of nutrition for one kind of plant, and not for another; and the means are explained of supplying to an exhausted or meagre soil its deficiencies. It also gives the *rationale* of the dairy and the fattening of animals.

This little work is the basis of both agricultural art and science. A knowledge of its principles is within the comprehension of every child of twelve years old; and if its truths were impressed on the minds of the young, a foundation would be laid for a vast improvement in that most important occupation which feeds and clothes the human race. Instead of conjecture, and hazard, and doubt and experiment, as heretofore, a knowledge of the composition of soils, the food of plants, and the processes

of nature in the culture and growth of crops, would elevate agriculture to a conspicuous rank among the exact sciences.

I hope that parents will be willing to introduce this brief Catechism into the Common Schools of this State.

S. YOUNG.

Albany, 24th January, 1845.

YALE COLLEGE LABORATORY,
New Haven, Conn., 20th January, 1845.

I have read with great pleasure and profit the condensed little Agricultural Catechism of Prof. James F. W. Johnston of Scotland. Like every production of his pen, it is characterized by a sound, practical good sense, which adds double value to his scientific labors, rendering them available to the very class for whom they are more especially designed—practical farmers.

I learned with pleasure from Prof. Johnston, that Mr. John P. Norton was about to edit, with an introduction, his Agricultural Catechism. This American edition should be in every village school in the land, as being within the comprehension of all intelligent children; and it cannot indeed be too highly recommended to the attention of all classes of teachers, as the best synopsis yet made of the valuable facts and principles which have been established in the important science of agriculture.

B. SILLIMAN, Jr.

I consider J. F. W. Johnston's Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology, to be extremely well adapted to the use of schools, and that it ought to be introduced as a text book into all our rural districts where farming is the principal employment of the population. The time has come when agriculture is to be taught as a science as well as cultivated as an art, and a little book like this sheds more light on the nature of soils, the elementary principles of plants, and the food necessary for their growth and maturity, in a small compass, than any other publication I have ever seen. The youthful mind can easily be made to comprehend the principles it teaches, and we are wanting to our own and the great interests of our country, if at this time we do not do all in our power to create a taste and diffuse a knowledge of so important a pursuit.

J. P. BEEKMAN,
Late President of N. Y. S. A. Society.

Kinderhook, Jan. 22, 1845.

Having examined Professor Johnston's Catechism on Agricultural Chemistry and Geology. I most cordially unite in the recommendation of the work. Its introduction into our Common Schools, will form a new era in the education of our children. The time has arrived in which every proper effort should be

made to give such an education to the rising generation as will prepare them rightly to appreciate, as well as successfully to follow, the pursuits of Agriculture, for which most of them are designed. It will give me great pleasure to do all in my power to disseminate this little work, which I doubt not will produce the most happy effects throughout our country.

BENJ. P. JOHNSON,
Rome, Jan. 23d, 1845. Pres't N. Y. State Ag. Society.

From the Am. Quarterly Journal of Agriculture and Science.

The reputation of this work is so well established, that it is hardly necessary at this late day to recommend it. It is certainly as useful to a large class of farmers as to the pupils in schools. It is plain, simple, and contains all the elements of agricultural chemistry; and as much of chemistry as this work contains, must be in his possession, if he would read the ordinary agricultural journals of the day.

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